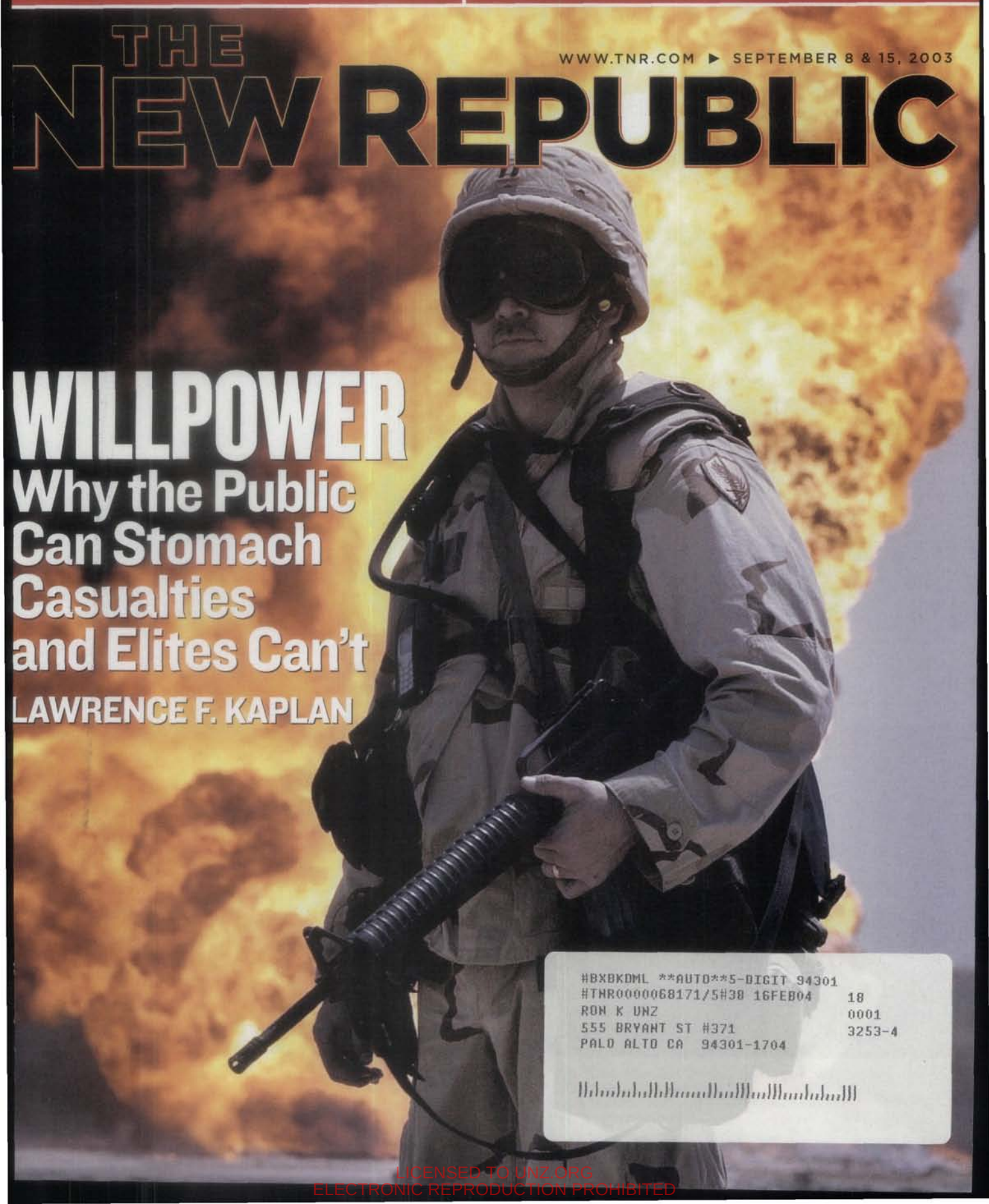
A GREAT FIRST NOVEL
JAMES WOOD

TIME FOR THE DEMS TO HIT BACK
THE EDITORS

THE NEW REPUBLIC
WWW.TNR.COM ▶ SEPTEMBER 8 & 15, 2003



# WILLPOWER

## Why the Public Can Stomach Casualties and Elites Can't

LAWRENCE F. KAPLAN

#BXBKDML **AUTO**5-DIGIT 94301
#TNR00000068171/5#38 16FEB04 18
RON K UNZ 0001
555 BRYANT ST #371 3253-4
PALO ALTO CA 94301-1704

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# WISH UPON A STAR

## OR MAKE A DREAM COME TRUE?

The sun holds such bright promise as a clean, renewable energy source. And yet for years, it's remained out of reach. Clean, yet too expensive. So the question is: Do we follow the sun or just turn out the lights and go home? Ignoring alternative energy is no alternative. Fossil fuels

**PROFITS & PRINCIPLES.**

are going to remain the major source of energy for the foreseeable future, but we are also working on new energy technologies. Keeping pace with the world's accelerating demand for energy and supplying power to remote areas require Shell to pursue renewable resources like solar and wind energy. We established Shell Renewables with a commitment to develop these new opportunities commercially. One of our goals is to make solar energy cheaper, more efficient and more accessible, both for businesses and

**IS THERE A CHOICE?**

homes. It's part of our commitment to sustainable development, balancing economic progress with environmental care and social responsibility. So with real goals and investment, energy from the sun can be more than just a daydream.

WE WELCOME YOUR INPUT. CONTACT US ON THE INTERNET AT WWW.SHELL.COM/SOLAR OR EMAIL US AT 'TELL-SHELL@SI.SHELL.COM' OR WRITE TO US AT: LISTENING AND RESPONDING, SHELL OIL COMPANY, P.O. BOX 2463, HOUSTON, TX 77252.

(Each Shell company is a separate and distinct entity. In this advertisement, the reference to "Shell International Renewables" is a reference to those Shell companies which are individually engaged in the renewables business where no useful purpose is served by identifying the individual company or companies.)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
MARTIN PERETZ

EDITOR Peter Beinart
LITERARY EDITOR Leon Wieseltier
EXECUTIVE EDITOR Christopher Orr
MANAGING EDITOR J. Peter Scoblic
FOREIGN EDITOR Joshua Kurlantzick
SENIOR EDITORS
Jonathan Chait, Jonathan Cohn, Michelle Cottle, Gregg Easterbrook, John B. Judis, Lawrence F. Kaplan, Andrew Sullivan, James Wood
LEGAL AFFAIRS Jeffrey Rosen
ASSISTANT MANAGING EDITOR
Sacha Zimmerman
FILMS Stanley Kauffmann
THEATER Robert Brustein
ART Jed Perl
ARCHITECTURE Martin Filler
DANCE Jennifer Homans
TELEVISION Lee Siegel
POETRY EDITOR Glyn Maxwell
NEW REPUBLIC BOOKS (Basic Books)
Chip Rossetti
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
Fouad Ajami, Akhil Reed Amar, Peter Berkowitz, Paul Berman, Jean Bethke Elshtain, Nathan Glazer, Anthony Grafton, David Grann, Yossi Klein Halevi, Ann Hulbert, Tony Judt, Robert Kagan, Michael Kinsley, Charles Krauthammer, Jeremy McCarter, John McWhorter, Sherwin B. Nuland, David Rieff, Maggie Scarf, Ronald Steel, Cass R. Sunstein, Margaret Talbot, E.V. Thaw, Helen Vendler, Michael Walzer, Sean Wilentz, Alan Wolfe, Robert Wright
CONTRIBUTING ARTISTS
Jack Coughlin, David Cowles, Vint Lawrence, David Schorr
ASSOCIATE EDITORS
Michael Crowley, Franklin Foer, Ryan Lizza, Noam Scheiber, Jason Zengerle
ASSOCIATE LITERARY EDITOR
Ruth Franklin
ART/DESIGN DIRECTION
Joe Heroun, Christine Car/H2C Media
EDITORIAL-CORPORATE COORDINATOR
Laura E. Obolensky
PRODUCTION DIRECTOR AND INFORMATION-TECHNOLOGY DIRECTOR
Bruce Steinke
PRODUCTION MANAGER
Henry Riggs
ASSISTANT EDITORS
Spencer Ackerman, Kara Baskin, Christiane Culhane, Clay Risen
ASSISTANT TO THE EDITOR
Alison Hornstein
LITERARY ASSISTANT
Deborah Friedell
ASSISTANT POETRY EDITOR
Melanie Rehak
REPORTER-RESEARCHERS
Josh Benson, Anne O'Donnell

PRESIDENT & PUBLISHER
Stephanie Sandberg
GENERAL MANAGER Robin Prausa
CONSUMER MARKETING DIRECTOR
Peter Glovin
ONLINE BUSINESS DIRECTOR Ari Gersen

ADVERTISING SALES & MARKETING
ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER Richard Parker
DIRECTOR OF ADVERTISING, WEST
Joan Stapleton Tooley
ACCOUNT MANAGER Julie Sturmak
BUSINESS ASSISTANT Ranee Jaber
MARKETING COORDINATOR/RESEARCHER
Kate Genser

TNR/ON SYMPOSIA ON PUBLIC POLICY
Sally Aman, Cheryl O'Donnell

MEDIA OUTREACH
Terese Schlachter

FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION
SENIOR ACCOUNTANT Debra Sotelo
ACCOUNTING ASSISTANT Vanessa Wilson
BUSINESS ASSISTANT Mandy Hansen

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
ROGER HERTOG, Chairman
MARTIN PERETZ
MICHAEL STEINHARDT

THE NEW REPUBLIC
Updated daily. On the Web at www.tnr.com.

THE NEW REPUBLIC
A JOURNAL OF POLITICS AND THE ARTS

SEPTEMBER 8 & 15, 2003 WASHINGTON, D.C. ISSUES 4,625 & 4,626 VOLUME 229

## Cover Story

*Lawrence F. Kaplan* 19 **Willpower** America's military and civilian leaders assume the public won't tolerate many American casualties in Iraq. They're wrong. For decades, the public has shown a remarkable willingness to stomach American combat deaths. It's the leaders who haven't.

## Politics & the World

4 **CORRESPONDENCE** Is Bush keeping his Africa AIDS pledge? &c.

*Peter Beinart* 6 **TRB | Eyes on the Prize** Republican Governor Bob Riley has launched a moral crusade to help the poor in Alabama. Why don't civil rights groups care?

*The Editors* 7 **Hardball** In Congress and the states, the GOP is violating long-established rules of fair play. It's time for Democrats to respond.

8 **NOTEBOOK** Richard Perle as Joseph Goebbels? &c.

*Ryan Lizza* 10 **Campaign Journal: Free Fall** Is the Kerry campaign collapsing?

*Jason Zengerle* 11 **Being There** How Cruz Bustamante, one of the least impressive politicians in California, became the recall's front-runner.

*Afshin Molavi* 14 **Tehran Dispatch: Fine China** Tehran tries to follow Beijing's lead.

*Joshua Kurlantzick* 16 **Shanghai Dispatch: No-Look Pass** Why the turmoil in Hong Kong isn't rattling China.

*Jonathan Cohn* 38 **LOS ANGELES DIARIST | Beans for Life**

## Books & the Arts

*Stanley Kauffmann* 24 **FILMS | Out West** *Open Range* has all the simplicity of the classic Western but none of the relevance.

*Joseph Frank* 25 **Haman in Paris** Racine's *Esther* challenges the stereotypes of French anti-Semitism.

*James Wood* 29 **Making It New** *Brick Lane* by Monica Ali

*Karl Kirchwey* 32 **POEM** | *Sandlot & Tenderloin*

*Eugene D. Genovese* 33 **God Without Thunder** *America's God: From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln* by Mark A. Noll

COVER PHOTO BY *Gustavo Ferrari/AP Wide World*

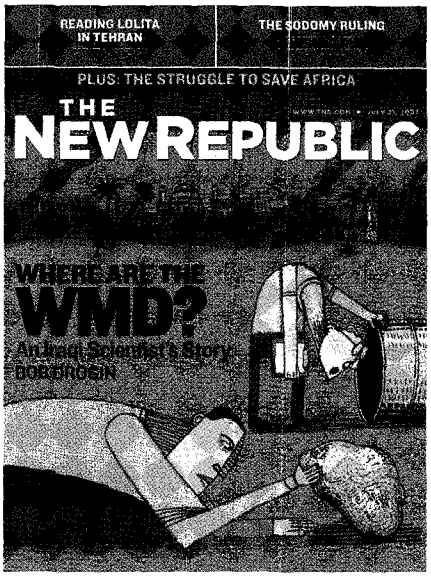
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# CORRESPONDENCE

## STRATEGIC RELIEF

IN THE EDITORIAL "TALK IS CHEAP," the editors correctly note that the range of support for President Bush's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief is broad and crosses some well-established political boundaries (July 21). The editors fail to note, however, that the most important support for our approach has come from Africa itself—on May 15, the African ambassadors and entire African Diplomatic Corps in the United States signed a letter encouraging the U.S. Senate to adopt the president's approach to this devastating epidemic. Additionally, the editorial would have been richer had it acknowledged our oft-stated position that, to be effective, a large infusion of new funds for HIV/AIDS in Africa and the Caribbean needs to be "ramped up" over time. This approach allows countries the time to expand their ability to effectively use resources of this magnitude in a proactive and strategic manner.

Any practicing AIDS physician (and I am one) knows that HIV/AIDS treatment, care, and prevention are complicated matters. TNR correctly points out the importance of public health infrastructure development in responding to global HIV/AIDS. But, moreover, the training of doctors and nurses is essential for the delivery of HIV/AIDS treatment. For these and other reasons, our analysis holds that less money will be needed in the first years of the program than in later years, when large numbers of patients will be receiving costly antiretroviral drugs. Our request for $1.9 billion in the first year reflects this view. We are steadfast in our commitment to a $15 billion, five-year program. We have gone on record with our intention to request funds greater than $3 billion per year, beginning in fiscal year 2006, to achieve an average of $3 billion per year over the course of five years.




TNR is also correct that President Bush promised that his initiative would include $1 billion for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, and it does. We have always been clear that our commitment was $1 billion over five years. This administration made the founding contribution to the Global Fund, currently supplying 42 percent of its operating revenue, and has devoted the considerable talents of Secretary of Health and Human Services Tommy Thompson to chair the fund's executive board. The appropriate level of U.S. tax support for a novel, multilateral, and untested mechanism like the Global Fund is debated, and rightly so, among many knowledgeable people of goodwill. The implication, however, that our budget request for the Global Fund is a departure from prior commitments is untrue and does not add substance to this debate.

Finally, TNR's budget analysis on global AIDS funding compares our fiscal-year 2004 request with fiscal-year 2003, congressional levels that were appropriated after our request was published. Such a comparison, particularly in light of stepped up funding in Afghanistan, Iraq, and other new accounts that were added to support development goals, leaves your readers with quite a different impression of our commitment and interests.

President Bush's Emergency Plan for

Pulliam
2004
The Pulliam Journalism Fellowship

GANNETT

Jump-start your newspaper journalism career with a solid program that boasts four Pulitzer Prize winners among its alumni — the Pulliam Journalism Fellowship. The Fellowship offers myriad career opportunities; in fact, a Pulliam Fellow from our first class of 1974, Barbara Henry, now serves as president and publisher of *The Indianapolis Star*.

Now entering its 31st year, the 2004 Pulliam Journalism Fellowship helps build a bridge from the classroom to the newsroom. Fellows are assigned to *The Indianapolis Star* or *The Arizona Republic* in Phoenix for 10 weeks each summer as staff reporters. We award 20 Fellowships annually. The stipend is $6,500.

Our Fellowships are open to college sophomores, juniors and seniors pursuing a career in newspaper journalism. We will be accepting applications for our Summer 2004 program as of September 2003.

Visit our Web site at http://www.indystar.com/pjf or e-mail Fellowship director Russell B. Pulliam at russell.pulliam@indystar.com for an application packet. You also may request a packet by writing:

Russell B. Pulliam, Director
The Pulliam Journalism Fellowship
P.O. Box 145
Indianapolis, IN 46206-0145

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

AIDS Relief is the largest single upfront commitment in history for an international public health initiative. On January 28, the president used the State of the Union address to place global HIV/AIDS dead center in the nation's and the world's agendas. This leadership, which people fighting HIV/AIDS have been seeking for years, is historic. Diminishing it on the basis of markedly incomplete information does not serve the fight against HIV/AIDS.

**JOSEPH F. O'NEILL, M.D., M.P.H.**
***Director, Office of National AIDS Policy***
***Washington, D.C.***

**THE EDITORS REPLY:**
Joseph O'Neill ignores a central argument of the editorial: At the same time the president touts his African AIDS program, he slashes foreign aid that maintains the continent's public health system. These cuts hit the same clinics where the administration also wants to distribute antiretrovirals.

O'Neill says the administration will "ramp up" its program from the initial $2 billion. But it has consistently created the impression that it would be spending a full billion more. In a bill-signing ceremony at the State Department on May 27, the president authorized $3 billion per year for fighting African AIDS. His AIDS adviser, Anthony Fauci, has bandied about the $3 billion figure since January, on National Public Radio's "Talk of the Nation" and on other talk-show interviews. Moreover, even if the White House had always intended to start slowly, O'Neill's logic flies in the face of Washington wisdom. With the tax cut making budgetary pressures even greater in the coming years, it's unlikely that the president will push for substantial funding increases—especially after he has already reaped the political gain for his promise.

Next, he says that the administration's funding for the Global Fund is consistent with its promises. While this may be technically accurate, the simple fact is the administration has appropriated $150 million less than it gave the Global Fund last year—a damning indictment of how little substance lies beneath the president's rhetoric.

Finally, O'Neill paints the administration as a victim of congressional budgetary constraints. He doesn't mention that, in July, all but ten House Republicans voted against an amendment adding $300 million in African AIDS spending. Somehow we doubt all of these Republicans ignored the lobbying of their president.

## PRO-CHOICE

ANDREW SULLIVAN SUBSCRIBES TO gay rights on the theory that sexual orientation is beyond choice ("Citizens," July 21). For this reason alone, he says, there should be no sodomy laws. Fortunately, in *Lawrence* v. *Texas*, the Supreme Court made no commitment to this balderdash. It is no defense of liberty to link religious or political beliefs to anatomy, physiology, or to genes. It is also a mistake to defend sexual liberty by treating people as if they were biological puppets. There are plenty of reasons to respect people's choices about the sex they have in private, regardless of where their sexual interests come from. In fact, in making its decision, the Court does not refer to the origins of homosexuality. It is as a matter of protecting interpersonal bonds that the Court prohibits the state from intruding upon the private sexual relationships of adult men and women. In the long run, this approach—recognizing the integrity of freely chosen relationships—will do more to advance the interests of gays and lesbians than will any use of biological theory as a blueprint for civil rights.

**TIMOTHY F. MURPHY**
***Professor of Philosophy in the Biomedical Sciences***
***University of Illinois College of Medicine***
***Chicago, Illinois***

Please address letters to Correspondence, **The New Republic**, 1331 H Street, NW, Suite 700, Washington, D.C. 20005; letters may also be sent electronically to letters@tnr.com. All letters should include the writer's full name, address, and telephone number; be typed double-spaced; and be fewer than 200 words. Letters may be edited for space and clarity. Please do not send letters via fax.

**THE NEW REPUBLIC** (ISSN 0028-6583), Vol. 229, Numbers 10 & 11, Issues 4,625 & 4,626, September 8 & 15, 2003. (Printed in the United States on August 28, 2003.) Published weekly (except for combined issues dated April 21 & 28, July 7 & 14, July 28 & August 4, August 18 & 25, September 8 & 15, October 13 & 20, December 1 & 8, and December 29, 2003 through January 12, 2004) at 1331 H Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20005. Telephone (202) 508-4444. For advertising inquiries, please contact Mandy Hansen at (202) 508-4444 or our NY sales office at (212) 465-8447. Yearly subscriptions, $79.97; foreign, $119.97 (U.S. funds); Canada, $99.97 (U.S. funds). Back issues, $8.00 domestic and $10.00 foreign/Canada (includes postage & handling). © 2003 by The New Republic, LLC. Periodicals postage paid at Washington, D.C., and additional mailing offices. Rights and permissions: fax (202) 628-9383. Indexed in Readers' Guide, Media Review Digest, Microform, Canadian Periodical Index, and CD-ROM are available through ProQuest, 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. Telephone (800) 521-0600. For reprints, call (202) 508-4444. Postmaster: Send changes of address to The New Republic, P.O. Box 37298, Boone, IA 50037-0298. Member, Audit Bureau of Circulations. Unsolicited manuscripts can be returned only if accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope (e-mail address: letters@tnr.com). For subscription inquiries or problems call (800) 827-1289 or visit our website at www.thenewrepublic.com.

**Request for Grant Proposals for Courses in the Study of Secular Judaism**

**$50,000 Awards for up to 3 years**

The Center for Cultural Judaism invites applications for Posen Foundation Grants for the Study of Secular Judaism, intended to encourage the study of the history, texts, philosophy and literature of secular Judaism within well-established university programs and departments of Judaic Studies, History, Humanities, Arts or the Social Sciences.

Grants of up to $50,000 each per year will be awarded for the 2004-2005 academic year, or as early as the Spring '04 semester. Upon review, these grants are renewable for up to two years.

**Deadline: November 1, 2003**

Background, Guidelines, Application, and Sample Syllabi are available at www.culturaljudaism.org

or by contacting
Myrna Baron
Executive Director
Center for Cultural Judaism
212-564-6711 x301
myrna@culturaljudaism.org

THE CENTER FOR CULTURAL JUDAISM

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# Eyes on the Prize

TRB

FROM WASHINGTON

THE PARK SERVICE NO LONGER counts crowds on the National Mall. And, for the organizers of the fortieth anniversary of the March on Washington, that's a good thing, because last week's turnout was miserable. In 1983, the march's twentieth anniversary drew 250,000. The thirtieth garnered 75,000. And this year? Twenty thousand, at best.

Why the diminishing interest? Perhaps because, in arguably the most important civil rights battle of the year, the civil rights groups are AWOL. That battle, contrary to what one might assume from the speakers at the march, isn't being fought in Iraq; it's being fought in Alabama. And it's not being led by Kweisi Mfume or Jesse Jackson; it's being led by a conservative Republican named Bob Riley.

Riley is that rarest of creatures: A genuinely inspiring politician. As a member of the House of Representatives, his hard-right instincts won him annual commendations from Grover Norquist's fanatically anti-tax group, Americans for Tax Reform. But, when he took over this year as Alabama governor, he encountered three ideologically discomforting truths about his state's tax system. First, it wasn't producing enough revenue to balance the budget, as the state constitution required. Second, it wasn't producing enough revenue to guarantee even a minimally adequate education for Alabama's children. Third, it fell largely on the poor.

In other words, Alabama has the kind of tax system Norquist wants for the United States. The state constitution, rewritten in 1901 at the behest of timber and cotton interests, largely exempts Alabama's extractive industries from property taxes. As a result, while timber companies own 71 percent of the state's land, they pay less than 2 percent of its property taxes. So how does Alabama make up for this lack of revenue? Partly, it doesn't: Its schools are the worst funded in the country, and last year the state tied for last in national writing tests. Partly, it taxes the poor. In most states, state income taxes kick in at around $18,000. In Alabama, they kick in at a breathtaking $4,600—or about one-fourth of the poverty line for a family of four. The state collects the majority of its revenue through highly regressive sales taxes; in some counties, the tax on groceries reaches 11 percent. A study by the liberal Citizens for Tax Justice found that, while the poorest one-fifth of Alabamians pay more than 10 percent of their income in taxes, the wealthiest 1 percent pay less than 4 percent.

Riley is trying to change this. He wants to exempt families below the poverty line from state income taxes while boosting property and state income taxes for the wealthy. As a result, the poorest two-thirds of Alabamians would see their taxes hold steady or go down. The wealthiest one-third would pay more, although still less than in most states. Riley's plan would bring in enough new revenue to balance the budget. It would also fund an intensive K-6 reading initiative, a salary boost for teachers willing to work in the worst schools, and college scholarships for high school seniors with good grades and test scores. In return for the new money, Riley has convinced Alabama's teachers' unions to scrap tenure for all new hires, giving principals far more authority to fire bad teachers. As Buddy Bell, minister at Landmark Church of Christ in Montgomery, recently told the *Montgomery Advertiser*, "This is the most courageous thing I have ever seen a governor do."

There's just one problem: To get his plan passed, Riley has to amend the Alabama constitution, which requires a statewide vote, set for September 9. And recent polls suggest the vote will be no. One reason is that Alabamians just viscerally loathe taxes. According to the Alabama Association of School Boards, since 1988 voters in various counties have rejected 57 of the 91 proposed property tax increases for schools. Another reason is that the plan's opponents, funded largely by—surprise!—big timber and agricultural interests, have raised three times as much as its supporters. National GOP groups have joined in as well. Norquist recently told *The Washington Post* he would make Riley "the poster child for Republicans who go bad. I want every conservative Republican elected official in the United States to watch Bob Riley lose and learn from it."

But there's one more reason the plan is behind in the polls: National civil rights groups have barely lifted a finger for it. Riley's plan would arguably do more for black and poor Alabamians than anything since the civil rights era. And yet, as far as I can tell, it received not a single mention at last week's anniversary March on Washington. You won't find any reference to it on the NAACP's website. In fact, the only prominent African American who has publically announced a trip to Alabama to support the initiative is "American Idol" winner Ruben Studdard.

Capitalizing on that indifference, Norquist and company have turned many black Alabamians against Riley's plan. An ad on black radio features a man warning, "Our property taxes could go up as much as fo' hundred percent" (400 percent sounds like a lot, but Alabama's property taxes are so low that the average homeowner would pay only $94 more per year, a sum that Riley's plan more than counteracts with state income tax cuts and increased federal income tax deductions). Some have suggested that Alabama's black leaders are sitting on their hands because Riley vetoed a bill to restore voting rights to ex-felons. A recent *Birmingham News* poll found black voters split on the plan and voters earning less than $30,000 strongly against it.

A national effort by civil rights organizations could change that. The NAACP and the Urban League, not to mention the Democratic Party, should be sending college students to Montgomery and Birmingham by the busloads. Al Sharpton, Jackson, and Mfume should be taking up residence in the state. Alabama GOP Chairman Marty Connors recently told *The Washington Post* that, "If this can pass in Alabama, it could be a precedent to attempt it elsewhere." And he's absolutely right. Riley, who couches his reforms in biblical language about the obligation to "take care of the least among us," is one of the few white politicians in recent history to try to use religion on behalf of social justice. He's won significant white evangelical backing, and, if his plan passes, it could upend conventional wisdom about what is politically, and morally, possible in the South. A conservative white Republican has thrown down the gauntlet to the supposed custodians of Dr. King's dream: Speak now or forever hold your peace.

**PETER BEINART**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

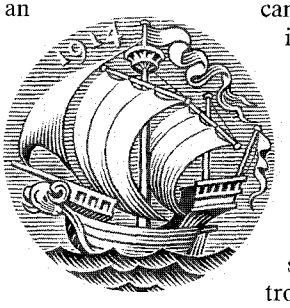
# Hardball

WHEN WE LAST saw the beleaguered House Democrats, just before Congress's August recess, they were on the brink of revolt, having suffered a growing list of indignities at the hands of House Republican leaders. As chronicled in THE NEW REPUBLIC (see "Oppressed Minority," Michael Crowley, June 23), Republicans have increasingly used the House Rules Committee to kill off Democratic amendments on everything from tax cuts to homeland security and to rewrite bills just before floor votes, leaving Dems clueless about their contents. The GOP has drastically limited debate on major issues, such as the budget and defense spending, and has prevented Democrats from offering alternatives. Even more outrageously, the GOP is trying to redraw congressional districts in Texas, Colorado, and now Ohio, an astonishing violation of the long-standing principle that redistricting occur only once a decade.

In late July, an exasperated Nancy Pelosi, the House minority leader, vowed that Democrats would use procedural delays to turn the days before the August recess into "a week from hell for Republicans." Not for the first time, however, the Democrats proved too timid to mud-wrestle the GOP. Most of the promised delays never materialized, prompting jokes that the Dems had instead delivered a "week from heck." This refusal to play parliamentary and political hardball has won the Democrats no public goodwill, only further humiliation. When Congress reconvenes next week, it's time for them to give the Republicans hell.

What does that mean? For starters, Democrats need to show the public how repressive the majority really is. The party's leaders grumble that the media ignores their complaints about smothered debate and strong-arm tactics. But the flattering national spotlight on the Texas legislators who fled their state rather than accede to the GOP's redistricting push is instructive. It's true that, unlike in Texas, House Democrats can't block legislation by depriving Republicans of a quorum; but it's time for them to consider more theatrical tactics—mass walkouts, for instance, or perhaps even a symbolic exodus from Washington—to grab public and media attention.

Democrats should also stop letting GOP leaders off the hook for their dubious ethics. Wearied by years of nasty partisan investigations, in 1997 House leaders established an informal ethics "truce," agreeing not to pursue misconduct charges against one another's members. Since then, only two ethics cases have been filed in the House. This truce is bad for Democrats, who generally have less to be ashamed of than Republican leaders, who work more closely with K Street lobbyists. For years, it has been alleged that Tom DeLay bullies lobbying firms into hiring and supporting Republicans over Democrats. And, in February, top aides to House Financial Services Chairman Michael Oxley reportedly suggested to a mutual-fund lobbying group that Oxley might end a committee probe into the mutual-fund industry if the group took on a Republican tilt. Democrats have vulnerabilities of their own, to be sure. Most significantly, Pelosi recently had to close a fund-raising committee after questions about its legality. Still, on balance, Republicans have more to lose. And, besides, Congress has a duty to hold its members accountable for ethical violations.



Finally, the Democrats should counter the GOP's every punch when it comes to redistricting. The standoff in Texas continues, and the GOP is still trying to carve out new seats in Colorado. In both cases, Republicans argue that state courts inappropriately set boundaries after the census and that state legislatures are now simply asserting their rightful role. But, in Ohio, where the state legislature *did* create the districts, Republicans don't have even a fig leaf of a rationale for their nakedly partisan efforts. Initially, they resisted the itch to gerrymander for fear of prompting popular Democratic Representative Sherrod Brown into a bid against the state's sitting GOP governor. But, with the governor's race safely past, Republicans floated a new redistricting push this summer. Gambits like these are simply shameless power grabs, and, if Republicans continue them, Democrats should mount their own redistricting drives in states where they control the legislature and governorship—Oklahoma, New Mexico, Illinois, and California (recall permitting), to name a few.

Yes, Democrats might feel queasy about fighting dirtier. But the public policy implications of the GOP's cutthroat tactics should make them feel even worse. Democrats always say they're mad as hell—so why the heck won't they show it? ■

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# NOTEBOOK

## BUSH IS HELPLESS . . . RICE IS MISTAKEN

### INVOLUNTARY COMMITMENT

IN HIS 2002 STATE OF THE UNION address, President Bush issued a stirring call for increased volunteerism. "We want to be a nation that serves goals larger than self," he declared. "We've been offered a unique opportunity, and we must not let this moment pass." Nobody familiar with Bush's "compassionate conservatism" will be surprised at what happened next: He let the moment pass. Having earned another round of adulatory press coverage (e.g., *The New York Times* headline: "THE STATE OF THE UNION: SPENDING PLANS; A VISION OF AN AMERICA DEVOTED TO VOLUNTEER DUTIES"), Bush allowed Republicans in Congress to eviscerate his spending proposal—instead of being able to add the 25,000 positions Bush said he wanted, AmeriCorps will now have to *cut* 20,000 from its 50,000-person staff.

The pattern—come out for some idealistic new government program, milk it for the political benefit, then quietly let GOP allies water down the proposal or kill it entirely—has become depressingly familiar. (Bush has done this with the charitable-contribution tax credit, education, AIDS treatment in Africa, and the child tax credit for low-wage workers.) But the justifications change, and, this week, White House Budget Director Josh Bolten came up with a novel one: Bush is helpless to push through his agenda. "Even the president is not omnipotent. Would that he were," he told the *Times*, somewhat unsettlingly. "He often says that life would be a lot easier if it were a dictatorship. But it's not, and he's glad that it's a democracy." This is the same president who, when faced with GOP defections on HMO reform and tax cuts, organized massive lobbying campaigns by business groups, barnstormed the country with speeches, and brought reluctant members of Congress to the White House for arm-twisting sessions. But, when it comes to his beloved "armies of compassion," Bush becomes a helpless bystander. He makes suggestions, but, when Congress balks, he can only shrug his shoulders and genuflect before the wonders of the democratic system. We had thought this happened because Bush's compassionate agenda was a farce designed to create good photo opportunities of Bush reading to poor black children and working in soup kitchens. But perhaps Bolten is right. Perhaps Bush is just not quite the strong and decisive leader his admirers have made him out to be.

*George W. Bush*

### VANITY UNFAIR

THE EDITORS OF *VANITY FAIR* ARE none too fond of Leo Strauss, the political philosopher-turned-neoconservative icon. But they should take heed of what Strauss termed the "reductio ad Hitlerum" argument style—the practice of reducing an argument to a facile comparison to Adolf Hitler—which cheapens both the point and the person making it. In the letters section of the September *Vanity Fair*, the editors republished a photograph of neocon brain-truster Richard Perle sitting awkwardly in a rocking chair, juxtaposed with one of Hitler propaganda architect Joseph Goebbels in roughly the same pose. In case anyone missed the point, *Vanity Fair*'s caption asked, "SEPARATED AT BIRTH?" The proximate cause of this disgraceful analogy was a letter that noted a "similarity" and that argued, "Perle isn't the first government official to use deceit and fear mongering to force an extremist, irrational, and ultimately violent view on an entire nation, or globe." Does someone really need to explain to *Vanity Fair* that nothing Perle or President Bush will ever do can invite a comparison to Nazi Germany? Magazines get letters from cranks every day. They belong in the trash—alongside, it appears, *Vanity Fair*.

### THE GOOD POSTWAR

JOHN KERRY ROCKED THE HOUSE this week when he told the audience gathered for the Veterans of Foreign Wars conference in San Antonio that "a lack of planning and a lack of candor with the American people have placed our men and women in uniform in increased harm's way." Maybe that's why, that same day, Condoleezza Rice tried to place the Iraq occupation into a context the vets could understand: postwar Germany. Rice noted, "There is an understandable tendency to look back on America's experience in postwar Germany and see only the successes. But, as some of you here today surely remember, the road we traveled was very difficult." According to Rice, Germany saw the sort of guerrilla violence that U.S. forces now face in Iraq: "SS officers, called Werewolves, engaged in sabotage and attacked both coalition forces and those locals cooperating with them, much like today's Baathist and Fedayeen remnants."

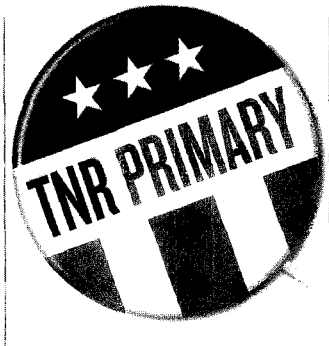
DAVID COWLES

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

To be sure, few would argue that rebuilding Germany was easy. But that's where the comparison ends—in fact, postwar Germany was marked by a surprising lack of guerrilla violence. "There was basically no violence directed at us or allied servicemen after capitulation," says Peter Fritzsche, professor of German history at the University of Illinois. Most Nazi officers were busy trying to save their own skins, and the vast majority of Germans were only too glad to see the war end and the Hitler regime toppled. The Nazis, after all, had only been in power for twelve years. As a result, unlike in Iraq, there was a wide range of social and political institutions left intact—if underground—during the Nazi era, which resurfaced after the war and quickly brought a sense of order to the reconstruction. What about the Werewolves? Organized by Heinrich Himmler in 1944, the units were supposed to slip behind Allied advances and sabotage supply lines. But they accomplished exactly one major operation—assassinating the mayor of Aachen—and that was *before* the end of the war. "I don't know where Condi's getting that, but it's news to me," says James Sheehan, professor of modern German history at Stanford University, Rice's former employer. The next time Rice is in Palo Alto, she'd be wise to stop by the history department.

## CLARIFICATION

FRANKLIN FOER'S ARTICLE "Founding Fakers" quoted from Robert Kagan's book *A Twilight Struggle: American Power and Nicaragua, 1977–1990* (August 18 & 25). The quote described Contra murders, rapes, and tortures. As excerpted, the quote doesn't make clear that Kagan was referring specifically to atrocities committed against lay preachers and religious workers who migrated to the countryside to work on behalf of the revolution and serve the "People's Church." ■




### VIETNAM SYNDROME

**Candidate:** John Kerry
**Category:** General Likeability
**Grade:** D

The Kerry campaign is not subtle about flogging its major comparative advantage: Its candidate is a Vietnam veteran with a chest full of medals. And, if you miss this point the first time, the Kerry campaign will make sure that you catch it the second and the third. John Kerry will officially launch his campaign in front of an aircraft carrier used in Vietnam. When he makes his pitch, he'll use lines like "I won't just bring to that profound responsibility the perspective of sitting in the situation room—I'll also bring the perspective of someone who's fought on the front lines." But there are three problems with this strategy. First, the narcissism problem. It's Kerry's ubiquitous use of "I" that has over the years created the impression of arrogance. Talking incessantly about his biography will not defuse this problem. Second, there's the *Big Lebowksi* problem. In the Coen brothers' movie, John Goodman's character relates every event in his life to his days in Vietnam. Kerry did many heroic things for his country. Talking about them all the time might create an aura of obsession. As John McCain and others have noted, it's better to let Vietnam serve as an unstated backdrop. And then there's the Wesley Clark problem. If he enters, Kerry is no longer the only candidate with a heroic record of military service, and, unlike Kerry, Clark doesn't need to reach back 30 years to find it on his resumé. —Franklin Foer

### CHEMICAL REACTION

**Candidate:** John Edwards
**Category:** Domestic Policy
**Grade:** A

Think for a moment not of the 2004 campaign but of December 3, 1984. That night, workers at a Union Carbide plant in Bhopal, India, began to complain of burning eyes. For two hours, some 40 tons of lethal methyl isocyanate gas poured over the densely populated city. As many as 4,000 people choked and vomited to death. Nearly 20 years after Bhopal, every Democratic candidate for president is rightly attacking George W. Bush's homeland security policies. But John Edwards has put a special emphasis on what may be our most alarming vulnerability. "We have one hundred twenty-three chemical plants in America, any one of which, if subjected to a terrorist attack—that could mean one million lives or more," Edwards said recently. So far, the Bush administration, catering to the chemical industry, has refused to call for mandatory federal safety standards on these toxic targets. Edwards has co-sponsored a Senate bill that would set federal standards and then require the Environmental Protection Agency to enforce them. How can anyone argue with that? —Michael Crowley

### FINANCIAL PLANNING

**Candidate:** Howard Dean
**Category:** General Likeability
**Grade:** B

Critics have rightly attacked Howard Dean for having it both ways on campaign finance. Early on, Dean blasted John Kerry for contemplating opting out of the public-financing scheme. A few days ago, however, Dean indicated he would consider doing the same. But a recent Associated Press story suggests why, in the long run, Democrats should consider ditching the public-finance system. As the article explains, Dean was planning to run under the auspices of Vermont's "Clean Election" law in 2000, abiding by a spending limit in exchange for public campaign financing. Dean then changed his mind, opting out and raising his own money. He did this because wealthy conservative groups, angered by Dean's decision to legalize gay civil unions, had given his opponent enough money that she could forego public funds. Dean's choice was to do the same or to stick with a public-finance system that would have left him underfunded against the most vitriolic state campaign in memory. Dean chose the former and eked out a narrow victory. Next year, President Bush may accept public financing for the general election, but he's going to bypass the system—and its spending caps—for the primary. That means he'll have some ungodly sum of money until the fall of 2004, when general-election public financing kicks in. If any Democrat could even come close to Bush's fund-raising, then he should—principles be damned. The fact that Dean seems to be the only candidate capable of doing this is a point in his favor. After all, if you really care about campaign finance reform, you're a lot better off with a Democrat—virtually *any* Democrat—in office than you are with Bush. —Jonathan Cohn

For primary items updated daily and complete candidate rankings, visit *www.tnr.com/primary.*

CARICATURES BY ZACH TRENHOLM

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Campaign Journal

# Free Fall

BY RYAN LIZZA

*John Kerry has little to smile about now.*

JOHN KERRY'S ADVISERS often talk about the presidential race turning into a two-tiered contest. "Structurally, the race is absolutely tiered," says Jim Jordan, Kerry's campaign manager. The idea is that Howard Dean and Kerry are in the top tier, and the rest of the field is stuck in relative obscurity in the second. "There's a very strong likelihood that the nominee will be either us or Dean," says Jordan. There is a good reason Jordan describes the race this way. Dean is now the front-runner, and the fight is on to define his main challenger. But what may be emerging is actually a different sort of two-tiered race: one where Kerry sinks into the second tier with his four fellow Washington legislators.

The Kerry campaign looks a little bit like a 1990s tech stock whose paper profits are slowly being unmasked as accounting gimmicks. Just a few months ago, other campaigns fretted about Kerry delivering a knockout punch in Iowa and New Hampshire that would end the race. Kerry aides could recite from memory statistics showing how the early front-runner in presidential primaries usually ended up as the party's nominee. The senator hired the most talented Democratic political consultants, lined up the earliest endorsements, and turned out the biggest crowds. But, now, as he embarks on a two-day swing through South Carolina, Iowa, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts on September 2 and 3, Kerry is slipping out of the top tier altogether.

By all the traditional yardsticks, the gap between Kerry and Dean is widening. In Iowa, the latest poll shows Kerry in third place, nine points behind the former Vermont governor. In New Hampshire, the senator's backyard, Kerry's support has collapsed. His yearlong lead has vanished, and he now trails Dean by 21 points in a new Zogby poll. The bleeding in New Hampshire is across the board—upscale Democrats, blue-collar Democrats, independents of all persuasions, every age group, and every area of the state. Even in New Hampshire's Boston suburbs, where Kerry should be polling strongest, Dean leads 40 to 21. "The bottom is falling out," says John K. White, a political scientist at Catholic University who writes a regular, in-depth analysis of Zogby's polls. "Can he still recover? Sure. But this is stunning and devastating."

In terms of fund-raising, Kerry's steady prowess during the first half of the year has been eclipsed by Dean's small-donor machine. Despite adopting some of the trappings of the Dean operation—a blog, Meetup.com, online contests—neither Kerry nor any of the other campaigns have had the guts to publicly announce their fund-raising goals. They were left, like everyone else in politics last week, shaking their heads in amazement as they watched a crudely drawn baseball bat on Dean's website turn red as it tracked online donations that poured in at a rate of more than $10,000 an hour for four days. Dean's fund-raising goal for this quarter is $10 million—the record amount Bill Clinton raised in the fall of 1995—which means the campaign, unlikely to set a target it can't reach, is confident it can raise millions more during that period. Kerry aides concede they won't match that amount.

Money was once a key rationale for the Kerry candidacy, especially when there was talk the senator would opt out of the public-financing system and tap his wife's fortune. But Kerry closed the door on that possibility in March. Now it's Dean who may opt out of the system because he could potentially raise so much more than the $45 million the public-financing laws allow him to spend.

Then there are the crowds. This week, both men were in Chicago to speak at a union convention. At a campaign event on Monday, Kerry chatted with a handful of veterans at the Navy Pier. The next day, Dean spoke before 3,500 supporters in the same spot. To be fair, Dean was on a much-hyped tour of the country. Kerry's big summer tour

DORIT RABINOVITCH

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

isn't until next week. But the differences are still glaring. On Dean's nine-city, coast-to-coast campaign swing this week, he stubbornly avoided Iowa, New Hampshire, and South Carolina. Instead, he touched down in places like Washington, Virginia, and Wisconsin, states that vote early in the nominating process (February 7, 10, and 17, respectively) but that have received almost no attention from the other presidential candidates. Kerry's trip, by contrast, takes him only to the three early states and Massachusetts. And, at the end of his tour, Dean announced he would soon be running ads in Washington and Wisconsin as well as in Arizona, New Mexico, South Carolina, and Oklahoma, states that vote on February 3, and of course Iowa and New Hampshire. That means that, five months before any Democrat has voted, Dean will have been on the air in eight of the first 15 caucus and primary states. Kerry hasn't started running ads yet.

BUT THIS WIDENING gap between Kerry and Dean may not be all bad for the Massachusetts senator. At least it is forcing him to turn his campaign's focus from process to message. Back when Kerry was christened The Front-Runner, his greatest selling points were insider trivia, such as the fact that in New Hampshire he had garnered the most endorsements from "PoliticsNH .com's 105 list of most important Democratic endorsements" (yes, there is actually such a list). His campaign didn't just round up interest groups and sign up talent (remember the Shrum primary?), it seemed to be *about* rounding up interest groups and signing up talent. "Up to this point in time, it's been politics, and fund-raising, and endorsements," says a senior adviser.

Now, Kerry is pivoting to a candidacy of message, while Dean's may be turning into a candidacy of process. Fund-raising marathons, Internet tools, TV advertisements, plane trips, baseball bats, quirky staffers, rising poll numbers—the Dean campaign serves up a never-ending diet of process stories. But it's hard to discern the Dean message that is buried beneath all the excitement about blogging and crowd sizes. This is where Kerry's campaign sees its opening. "He kicks up so much dust to make sure voters never ask, 'Is this man ready to be leader of the free world?' " says Jordan. "Voters are looking for a man of strength, experience, and sound judgment. Once the campaign is on that turf, and not the Internet and fly-arounds, that's when we will show our real strength."

And that of course is where Vietnam comes in. Dean's emergence means Kerry will now emphasize his Vietnam service even more (if that is possible). For one, Kerry's crumbling poll numbers in New Hampshire mean he has to build a firewall against Dean elsewhere. In a major tactical shift, Kerry will actually declare his candidacy in South Carolina, which is rich with members of the military and home to a large and well-organized population of veterans. In other early, post–New Hampshire states that are more conservative than Iowa and New Hampshire, such as Arizona, Oklahoma, Virginia, and Tennessee, Kerry is betting his military bonafides will also help.

In addition to drawing this distinction with Dean on stature, Kerry will contrast Dean's anger with a more hopeful message, "a positive, optimistic vision of what we can offer America," according to an aide. And, ideologically, he will hammer Dean from the right for advocating the full repeal of the Bush tax cuts.

Vietnam, optimism, tax cuts. It's a good contrast to Dean. But it sounds like the message of an establishment front-runner who is trying to pivot to the general election. And the reality is that Kerry is no longer the front-runner, and his biggest challenge isn't winning over the general electorate but winning back the partisan Democrats who abandoned him for Dean. "He's stressing his Vietnam experience and optimism," says White. "That's really important for the general election, but that's not where the primary electorate is at." Kerry is slipping into the second tier, to borrow his campaign's terminology, but he seems to be clinging to a plan designed for a first-tier candidate. Maybe his message will catch on, but right now he looks like a candidate in denial. ■

## The recall's unlikely front-runner.

# Being There

BY JASON ZENGERLE

REPORTERS AND PUNDITS have been quick to pronounce California's recall election "bizarre," "crazy," "loony," and "absurd." But, while these political observers have worn out their thesauruses ridiculing porn-star-turned-gubernatorial-candidate Mary Carey's proposal to tax breast implants and even Governor Gray Davis's Clintonian attempt to paint the recall as part of the vast right-wing conspiracy, they have barely raised an eyebrow at what has to be the California recall race's most freakish development to date: the emergence of Cruz Bustamante as its front-runner.

Although Bustamante is California's lieutenant governor and thus the state's second-highest elected official after fellow Democrat Davis, he is hardly what you'd call a political heavyweight. For one, there's the reality of Bustamante's job. Despite the lofty title, California's lieutenant governor has very little constitutional authority: The job's primary responsibilities are sitting on state higher-education panels and chairing the state commission that oversees public lands. Over the years, some California officials have even advocated eliminating the post. "All the lieutenant governor here has to do is wake up in the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

morning, check the paper, and make sure the governor is still alive," says one California Democratic operative. "And, if the governor's still alive, then the lieutenant governor can go back to bed." Then there's the reality of Bustamante himself. Short, fat, and balding, Bustamante, alas, doesn't make up for in brains what he lacks in looks: "I'm not the smartest guy," he recently conceded to the Associated Press. As Joel Kotkin, a senior fellow at Pepperdine University's Davenport Institute of Public Policy, says of Bustamante, "He's a big zero."

Indeed, prior to the recall, as California Democrats geared up for what they thought would be the state's next big political happening—the 2006 primary to succeed the term-limited Davis as governor—the man who was theoretically next in line for the job was practically an afterthought. "Bustamante was clearly in the second tier of candidates for 2006," says California Democratic consultant Darry Sragow.

But now, with the recall, Bustamante isn't just in the first tier, it looks like he's first in line: A recent *Los Angeles Times* poll found that he had the support of 35 percent of those surveyed, beating the second-most-popular recall candidate, Arnold Schwarzenegger, by 13 points. Talk about bizarre, crazy, loony, and absurd.

ALTHOUGH SCHWARZENEGGER'S TERMINATOR is the Hollywood character most frequently invoked during the recall campaign, Bustamante has his own silver-screen doppelganger: Chauncey Gardner. Like Peter Sellers's character in *Being There*, Bustamante has demonstrated an uncanny knack for being in the right place at the right time. The grandson of Mexican immigrants, in 1972 Bustamante was 19 years old and working for a fertilizer company near Fresno when his father, a barber, found out from a friend that a California congressman needed an intern in Washington. Bustamante eventually parlayed his Capitol Hill internship into a staff job in Sacramento, working for a state assemblyman. And, when his boss unexpectedly stepped down in 1993, he convinced Bustamante to run in a special election to succeed him. In 1996, after newly passed term limits eliminated his rivals, Bustamante was elected speaker of the state assembly. Two years later, he rode a Democratic wave (and lingering Latino resentment over the anti-illegal immigrant Proposition 187) to win the race for lieutenant governor.

The most remarkable thing about Bustamante's remarkable rise is how little he has distinguished himself along the way. As speaker, Bustamante's power was greatly diminished because of term limits, and his consensus-driven approach was often criticized as slow and ineffective: It took him two months just to give members their committee assignments. "In an assembly where you can only serve six years, the speaker is relegated to the role of being more of a shepherd than a disciplinarian," says Sragow.

As lieutenant governor, Bustamante, the state's highest-ranking Latino elected official, tried to carve out a niche as a race-relations specialist, trumpeting a program called One California, which sought "to serve as a forum to understand diversity." But he botched the effort when, speaking at a 2001 awards dinner hosted by the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, he accidentally substituted a racial slur for the word "Negro" during his speech. And some Latino groups fault Bustamante for siding too frequently with agribusiness over farm workers and not taking the lead on education, health care, and affordable housing. "He hasn't been a strong champion of Latino issues," says Luis Arteaga, executive director of the Latino Issues Forum in San Francisco.

Bustamante has apparently even had trouble fulfilling his minimal constitutional duties as lieutenant governor. His Republican opponent in last year's lieutenant governor's race charged that Bustamante had missed more than 80 percent of the meetings of the University of California Board of Regents and the California State University Board of Trustees in his first four years on the job. (Bustamante said the official record didn't reflect his actual attendance or involvement in higher-education issues.) "He's been a barely adequate lieutenant governor," says Kotkin. "How can you insult someone more?"

Still, despite all this, Bustamante was once again in the right place at the right time when California Democrats decided they needed a backup candidate in case the state voted to recall Davis. For one thing, unlike other California Democrats with gubernatorial aspirations—most notably, Attorney General Bill Lockyer and State Treasurer Phil Angeledes, both of whom appeared to be in good shape for 2006—Bustamante has nothing to lose. "This is his best shot at becoming governor," says Gregory Rodriguez, a Los Angeles–based senior fellow at the New America Foundation. What's more, in internal polls and focus groups conducted before the recall became official, California Democrats found that, when voters were asked who should logically replace the governor if he were to be recalled, a large number replied the lieutenant governor. "Having 'lieutenant governor' next to your name is the best ballot designation you can have in the recall election," says one California Democratic consultant. So, when Bustamante expressed his interest in running, California Democratic officials were receptive, and, once Bustamante tossed his hat in the ring, they made sure he was the only major Democratic candidate on the recall ballot.

Which, despite all the hype over Schwarzenegger, makes Bustamante the recall race's favorite. Although he must walk a fine line between denouncing the recall and, at the same time, asking voters to check his name on the second part of the ballot (something he tries to do with the awkward campaign slogan, "No on Recall, Yes on Bustamante"), California Democrats seem to believe Davis is a dead duck and Bustamante is their only hope of retaining power. In the last few weeks, prominent Democrats, such as Nancy Pelosi and most of California's Democratic congressional delegation, and important interest groups, such

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

## ACTIONS AND ARRESTS

There is no question that the international community has been engaged in a fierce war with a shadow enemy since September 2001. Nations around the world recognize the responsibility not only to protect their own citizens from the threat of terrorism, but to protect the citizens of other countries as well. Every government has had to take a stand in the fight against evil. Often, the truth is hard to determine because terrorists hide behind so many flags.

As part of a public debate in the United States, Saudi Arabia has come under much scrutiny. While our leaders have clearly stated our position and denounced terrorism at every turn, we recognize that we will ultimately be judged not by our words, but by our deeds.

Since September 2001, Saudi Arabia has arrested more than 500 individuals with suspected ties to terrorism. Over the course of these arrests, Saudi security officers also seized large quantities of high explosives, automatic rifles, rocket launchers, tons of bomb-making materials and devices, false identity cards and documents, and large amounts of cash. Many security officers have been killed or injured in recent counter-terror activities.

Many of these actions and arrests have been highlighted in the world press, including:

• Yousif Salih Fahad Al-Ayeeri, a.k.a. Swift Sword, a major Al-Qaeda operational planner and fundraiser who was killed on May 31 while fleeing from a security patrol.

• Ali Abdulrahman Said Alfagsi Al-Ghamdi, a.k.a. Abu Bakr Al-Azdi, who surrendered to Saudi authorities. Al-Ghamdi, considered one of the top Al-Qaeda operatives in Saudi Arabia, is suspected of being one of the masterminds of the May 12 bombings in Riyadh.

• Turki Nasser Mishaal Aldandany, another top Al-Qaeda operative and mastermind of the May 12 bombings, who was killed on July 3, along with three other suspects in a gun battle with security forces that had them surrounded.

• The Ministry of Interior announced on July 21 that Saudi authorities had defused terrorist operations which were about to be carried out against vital installations and arrested 16 members of a number of terrorist cells after searching their hideouts in farms and houses in Riyadh Province, Qasim Province and the Eastern Province.

• Three men were arrested at a checkpoint in Al-Ka'akia district of Makkah on July 25 for possessing printed material that included a "religious edict" in support of terrorist acts against Western targets.

• Saudi security forces on July 28 killed six terrorist suspects and injured one more in a gunfight at a farm in Qasim Province, 220 miles north of the capital, Riyadh. Two Saudi security officers were killed and eight suffered minor injuries. Four people who harbored the suspects were arrested.

• Three clerics, Ali Fahd Al-Khudair, Ahmed Hamoud Mufreh Al-Khaledi and Nasir Ahmed Al-Fuhaid, were arrested after calling for support of the terrorists who carried out the Riyadh attacks.

As the War on Terrorism wages on, Saudi Arabia remains committed to rooting out and bringing to justice those who perpetrate such heinous acts.

*"I vow to my fellow citizens, and to the friends who reside among us, that the State will be vigilant about their security and well-being. Our nation is capable, by the Grace of God Almighty and the unity of its citizens, to confront and destroy the threat posed by a deviant few and those who endorse or support them. With the help of God Almighty, we shall prevail."*

***Crown Prince Abdullah bin Abdulaziz,***
*May 13, 2003*

*"After the terrible attacks in Riyadh on May the 12th, the government of Saudi Arabia has intensified its longstanding efforts against the Al-Qaeda network...America and Saudi Arabia face a common terrorist threat, and we appreciate the strong, continuing efforts of the Saudi government in fighting that threat."*

***President George W. Bush,***
*July 1, 2003*

THE PEOPLE OF SAUDI ARABIA
Allies Against Terrorism
www.saudiembassy.net

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

as the California Teachers Association and the California chapter of the AFL-CIO, have jumped on the "No on Recall, Yes on Bustamante" bandwagon; even Davis's team is no longer standing in Bustamante's way by trying to stymie his fund-raising. "I feel the lieutenant governor is an able person, a good man," Davis said last week, stopping just short of an endorsement.

The unified party machine makes Bustamante's job that much easier, because, while Schwarzenegger must persuade conservative voters that he is the best choice among the several high-profile Republicans running, such as State Senator Tom McClintock and former Olympic games organizer Peter Ueberroth (who's technically running as an independent), all Bustamante has to do is get the Democratic base to turn out—a job at which the party and its allied interest groups excel. "The Bustamante campaign isn't about message as much as it's about mechanics," says Sragow. "If he can motivate people to turn out, he may very well do what you have to do here."

Of course, compared with a porn star or the Terminator becoming governor, the prospect of a career politician like Bustamante replacing Davis might seem anticlimactic. But a Bustamante victory would actually be a bigger shock; after all, at least Carey and Schwarzenegger are distinguished in their fields. And, if Bustamante won the recall election, that likely wouldn't be the end of the story. As the governor of California and the country's most prominent Latino elected official, Bustamante would almost certainly land a place on the list of potential 2004 Democratic vice-presidential candidates, and who knows: Next year at this time, we might be hearing talk of a Dean-Bustamante ticket. Would Bustamante be at all ready for that sort of job? No, but that hasn't stopped him before. ■

## Tehran Dispatch

# Fine China

BY AFSHIN MOLAVI

EARLIER THIS SUMMER, on July 9, roughly 5,000 Iranians, mainly pro-democracy students and discontented middle-class Tehran residents, converged on Tehran University to commemorate the fourth anniversary of Iran's 1999 pro-democracy protests. The conclave was only the latest manifestation of dissatisfaction. In recent months, protests against specific issues—the closing down of a newspaper or the planned privatization of universities, for example—have spiraled into broad-based demonstrations condemning Iran's conservative ruling clergy and even targeting Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei himself, normally off-limits for public criticism.

*Afshin Molavi is the author of* PERSIAN PILGRIMAGES: JOURNEYS ACROSS IRAN *(Norton).*

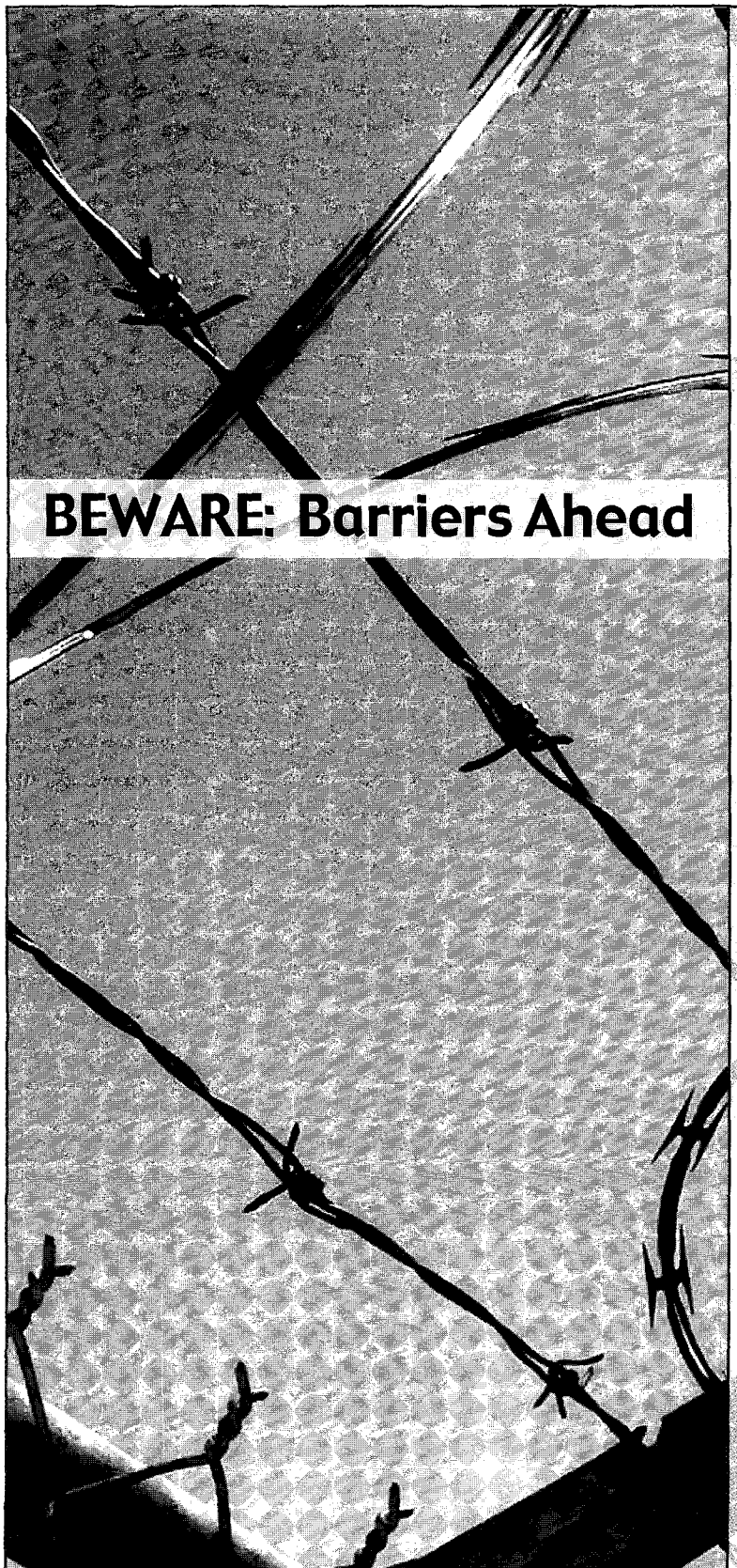
But the disenfranchised Tehranis were not the only ones on the streets on July 9. Scowling government-backed vigilantes, wearing their trademark beards and untucked shirts, chanted pro-government slogans and beat students with wooden sticks. One of the vigilantes, a beefy fellow with dark, closely cropped hair and blazing black eyes, walked within inches of my face before stepping back and launching a loud chant of "*Mashallah Hezbollah*" ("Thank God for the Party of God"). People in the crowd became visibly frightened, with good reason. The vigilantes have committed many violent acts against student protesters in the past four years. They have killed writers and dissidents, lashed reformers with chains, and even thrown one student out a window to his death.

Yet, while its goons continue with business as usual, Iran's conservative rulers are seeking new ways to mollify its embittered public. In particular, they may follow the lead of a fellow revolutionary/authoritarian regime that also once faced a student-led democracy revolt, a country where the regime remained in power by combining economic and cultural liberalization with overwhelming force against anyone who tried to extend it to the realm of politics. That country? China.

THE CHINA MODEL—political repression coupled with economic and cultural liberalization—has in recent months become the talk of Tehran's political circles. Conservatives, who still control the key levers of power—the judiciary, security services, and Supreme Leader's office—believe that, like Beijing, they can crush hard-core reformists while co-opting much of the population with jobs and limited social freedoms. "These conservatives love this silly China model," complained a reformist parliamentarian. "They think it will solve all of their problems ... and keep them in power." Recently, Mohsen Rezai, a key adviser to conservative former President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, spoke of a China model of Iranian development at an academic conference in Europe. In response to a question, Rezai said Iran would seek economic and social reform first, with political reform put on hold.

Like China before the 1989 Tiananmen protests, Iran is ripe for economic reform: It runs a centrally planned, inefficient economy with a private sector hampered by excessive red tape, market distortions, and monopolistic practices. Two years ago, a small delegation from Khamenei's office went to China on a fact-finding mission. Their course of study? "The China model of development," according to a source familiar with the trip. "They wanted to learn more about how China managed to grow its economy, attract foreign direct investment, maintain its grip on power in the face of a pro-democracy movement, and forestall serious political unrest

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED




# NetChoice

- Convenience
- Choice
- Commerce

**Existing and emerging barriers threaten the future of e-commerce.**

- Hordes of special interests are lobbying to prevent consumers from buying everything from contact lenses to wine online.
- The exponential growth of fraudulent and pornographic 'spam' is driving consumers away from the Internet and e-commerce.
- Financially strapped governments are even considering new taxes that would discriminate against the Internet.

These barriers cost businesses and consumers more than $40 billion last year and could jeopardize the $95 billion market for consumer e-commerce.

**NetChoice is committed to breaking down barriers to e-commerce.**
A coalition of e-consumers, e-commerce companies and trade associations, **NetChoice** promotes choice, convenience and commerce on the Internet. To learn more about **NetChoice**, barriers to e-commerce and what you can do to help, please visit us at *www.netchoice.org* or call **(866)259-3800.**

**www.NetChoice.org**
*Promoting Convenience, Choice and Commerce on the Net*

NetChoice Coalition
1413 K Street, N.W. 12th Floor
Washington, DC 20005
(866) 259-3800

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

after Tiananmen Square," the source said. The group subsequently wrote a report to the Supreme Leader discussing the feasibility of "the China model" for Iran.

Khamenei seems to have liked what he read. In the past year, the government has started to welcome foreign companies, a major step for a xenophobic regime that has a constitution with clauses making it difficult for foreign companies to operate. In late June, Khamenei, to the astonishment of many, stressed the importance of foreign investment for Iran's economy. "That is the first time I have ever heard Khamenei speak positively of foreign investment," one political analyst said. "He usually refers to foreign investors as exploiters and bloodsuckers." Meanwhile, the government recently introduced private banking to compete with inefficient state-owned banks and has indicated that foreign banks will be allowed to enter the market within a few years. Iranian economic officials have also hit the road, making foreign-investment pitches in London and Paris.

The conservatives also have allowed some cultural liberalization. Youth love stories have become common fare at movie theaters, unthinkable just a few years ago. Pop-music concerts are making a comeback after years of being banned. In fact, the government cleverly granted a performance license to a leading band, Arian, allowing it to play on July 9 in the park of one of the Shah's old palaces, distracting some people from that day's demonstrations. Arian drew a sold-out crowd for a week's worth of concerts.

At the same time, however, the government has shown even less tolerance for political protest than in the past. On July 9, when I arrived at Tehran University at dusk, I saw helicopters circling overhead, helmeted riot police on guard, plainclothes security officers on motorbikes, and pro-government thugs roaming the area. Checkpoints across the city were manned by members of the Basij, a volunteer militia that comes under the command of the Revolutionary Guard, a branch of the military. Earlier in the day, plainclothes government officials had detained three student leaders at gunpoint.

The Islamic Republic has also bolstered its control over information. As in China, where the government has used satellite-TV restrictions and Internet firewalls to prevent information from entering the country, in July Iran knocked out the signal of Los Angeles–based opposition TV stations that repeatedly call for Iranians to take to the streets. When Iranians turned on their televisions in search of one of the stations, they got a dark screen.

CAN TEHRAN SUCCESSFULLY follow Beijing's lead? In the short run, perhaps. Much of the population is in dire economic straits and would welcome even minor economic liberalization, while hard-line thugs have for the moment cowed much of the population. The robust show of force prevented the July demonstrations from mushrooming into a large movement, leaving many young Iranians both fearful and pessimistic. "Should I go to a pop concert and have some fun or go to an ineffective protest and get beaten up?" one student asked me. Meanwhile, as in China, where government crackdowns have led many to simply leave the country, last year as many as 180,000 Iranians emigrated.

Unfortunately, in the long run Tehran will probably prove far more skilled at crowd control than at the other half of the Chinese strategy, economic growth. Iran does not possess the vast labor pool that drew foreign investment to China, and, though the government has promised to slash red tape, it has so far proved unable to reform Iran's complex labor laws, which make many foreign companies wary of entering the Islamic Republic. Iran's convoluted, poorly enforced commercial legal code also scares off foreigners. Ali Rashidi, an Iranian economist, argues, "The entire structure of the economy needs to be restructured." "They will open foreign investment just enough, but not nearly as much as China," says one Iranian analyst. "They will improve the economy just enough through government intervention, but it won't be sustainable."

Without foreign investment, which has powered China's economic boom, the Iranian economy cannot grow quickly on its own. Meanwhile, Iran's ruling mullahs are unlikely to allow as much cultural liberalization as the Chinese government, since Iran contains a larger core of religious, cultural conservatives than communist, atheist China.

Lacking strong economic growth, even the government's harsh repression ultimately will not stop the tide of reform. One Foreign Ministry official has said Iran will "push as far as we can without getting our skirts caught in the fire." But Iran cannot fully emulate China's example, and, without the kind of economic and cultural opening Beijing has delivered, a few blazes may be around the corner in Tehran. ■

## Shanghai Dispatch

# No-Look Pass

BY JOSHUA KURLANTZICK

SET IN THE heart of Shanghai's booming commercial district, Xintiandi, a new development of cafés, restaurants, and shops, has become *the* meeting place for business and intellectual elites, a group that has expanded along with the Shanghai economy, which grew by more than 10 percent last year. These nouveaux riches come to Xintiandi to blow their cash at the city's latest luxury symbol, a Starbucks; to read uncensored papers flown in from Hong Kong; to chew over current events; and to cultivate *guanxi*, the personal connections that drive commerce in China.

When I visited Shanghai in mid-August, the foreign papers in town were running articles every day about the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The illness and chronic disease resulting from inactive lifestyles cost as much as $77 billion a year to treat. That's why Blue Cross and Blue Shield Plans across the nation are launching ***WalkingWorks***℠, an unprecedented effort to work with employers to help Americans add physical activity to their daily routines. It's one of the many ways we're doing our part to control rising healthcare costs. For more information, visit our web site at **www.bcbs.com**.

**Healthcare. Affordable. Now.**

**BlueCross BlueShield Association**

An Association of Independent Blue Cross and Blue Shield Plans

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

aftermath of political demonstrations in Hong Kong. On July 1, nearly half a million of the city's residents had taken to the streets to protest new national security legislation, proposed by Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa at Beijing's behest to limit dissent. Several days later, more than 40,000 people followed up with a demonstration demanding that more of the "representatives" in the city's legislature actually be elected by the people. But, in Xintiandi, the wealthy Chinese I encountered were discussing one topic—David Beckham's performance during his soccer club's current Asian tour—and few expressed curiosity about the Hong Kong protests. That Shanghai's elites were talking about Becks rather than Hong Kong might surprise Western commentators, who predicted the turmoil in Hong Kong would rattle China. But those observers have simultaneously overestimated Chinese elites' interest in political reform and underestimated the Communist Party's ability to control the blue-collar workers, who could be roused by Hong Kong's example. What's more, in focusing on the protests, the Western press has ignored the real way Hong Kong might subvert the Chinese regime.

THE HONG KONG demonstrations made the front pages of *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *The Wall Street Journal*, and a number of newsweeklies made the protests their cover story. Many publications predicted repercussions for the mainland government. *BusinessWeek* warned that, "for the Communist Party leadership in Beijing, Hong Kong's summer of discontent is nevertheless a nightmare" and speculated that the mainland Chinese would follow with their own protests. In *Far Eastern Economic Review*, the leading Asia magazine, China expert Arthur Waldron pronounced that "Hong Kong looks set to demonstrate the weakness of China's present rulers." *The Washington Post* ran a lengthy front-page story warning that the Hong Kong demonstrations would lead to tension on the mainland, while *The New York Times* predicted the protests "could prod bolder action by mainland China's many discontented groups."

But the reality has been far less dramatic, even on college campuses, the incubators of the 1989 demonstrations in Tiananmen Square and around the country. Professors in Shanghai say there has not been a single protest inspired by the Hong Kong events this summer. Indeed, five professors from a range of Chinese universities told me their students care little about the Hong Kong demonstrations. American intelligence officials who monitor Chinese chat rooms—considered by many China specialists to be the best window into urban public sentiment, since postings are less subject to censorship than Chinese newspapers—say most participants displayed no opinion toward the protests. By comparison, during the EP-3 spy-plane incident between the United States and China in 2001, the chat rooms were alive with comments. Even the managing editor of one of China's most reform-minded publications told me that few of his staff were discussing Hong Kong or expecting the protests to have any impact on the mainland.

In part, Chinese who know what's happening in Hong Kong pay little attention because Hong Kongers have billed their protests as a local affair. Yeung Sum, head of the Democratic Party, Hong Kong's most aggressive proponent of political liberalization, told reporters the July 1 march was "nothing related to the central government." And many Chinese still view Hong Kongers as a separate people. "Most mainlanders don't see Hong Kong as part of China, because Hong Kong was distinct so long," says Eric Harwit, a China expert at the University of Hawaii.

But Hong Kong's rage has failed to take root across the border for other reasons, as well—reasons more chilling for Chinese democracy advocates. China's once-defiant intellectuals, the men and women who might lead protests on the mainland, have in recent years largely cast their lot with the party, which has reformed the economy—benefiting elites, who have taken lucrative jobs in the private sector. "The intellectual class has made a devil's bargain since 1989," says Jiang Xuejin, a Chinese scholar based in Toronto. Elites have stopped promoting political reform and focused on making money, he says. China's east coast, the most prosperous part of the country, has become one of the world's fastest-growing markets for luxury cars, high-end mobile phones, and ultra-luxury housing developments—Bentley has opened one of its most successful dealerships in Beijing. Cashing in on the material success, dissidents who fled China in 1989 have returned to set up businesses, many in the telecommunications industry, and have shown little compunction about toeing the party line. Last year, China's leading Web entrepreneurs signed a pledge vowing to censor information on the Internet harmful to the regime.

Even China's artists, professors, and university students, once the vanguard of reform, have become more conservative. One professor I talked to says many academics want to earn money to buy cars, take trips, and send their children to private schools. "They barely spend time in class—they spend their time giving private lessons," she says. Another professor says that, when they do talk about politics, academics advocate incremental reforms, such as small changes to China's constitution—the kind of slow progress that can be managed by the party. And many students are no better. "They care about getting a job," one professor said. Indeed, according to a professor studying trends at Chinese universities, students are forsaking once-popular majors, such as political science, for more functional subjects, such as computer science and business.

Younger intellectuals can also be fiercely nationalist—much prouder of China than their parents and willing to view protests like those in Hong Kong as insults to the country. "Younger Chinese haven't lived through difficult times. They've only lived through prosperity and nationalist rhetoric," says one American intelligence official. One academic told me he invited Senator Joseph Biden to speak to his class two years ago. When Biden criticized the Beijing government, students stood up and defended the party.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Another professor said that, when he criticizes the government, some students quietly object.

If China's elites are uninterested in protesting, the country's blue-collar workers, by contrast, are willing to cause a ruckus. Han Dongfang, a Chinese labor specialist, has estimated that in one year China witnesses 200,000 protests, many by farmers, laborers, coal miners, or other working-class Chinese. These men and women have not profited from the party's economic changes, which privatized the state-linked companies that had provided many blue-collar jobs. Analysts believe there are now nearly 200 million unemployed laborers wandering through China looking for jobs—a group larger than the entire working population of the United States—and that more than 600 million Chinese in the country's interior have derived little benefit from the party's economic reforms. Indeed, whereas two decades ago China had one of the most equal distributions of income in the world, today economists estimate it has one of the most unequal distributions of income in Asia. When I visited Yunnan Province, a region of China's interior, last year, workers were living in shacks on tiny patches of dirt and struggling to survive on a few hundred dollars per year—less than the cost of a couple dinners in Xintiandi. Their children showed signs of malnourishment.

Unfortunately, few of these aggrieved workers have any idea what's going on in Hong Kong, making it nearly impossible for the demonstrations to spark labor protests on the mainland. Though foreign satellite television and the Internet are available in cities, they are prohibitively expensive for working-class Chinese. Jiang, the Toronto academic, says that none of the protesting Chinese workers he has met can afford to access the Web, and none knew about demonstrations in other parts of the country. And the party still keeps a tight leash on the mass-market broadsheets most Chinese read. Neither the major Chinese papers nor Xinhua News Agency, China's version of the Associated Press, have even mentioned the demonstrations in Hong Kong. Workers need intellectuals, who have access to news, to unite and lead them, but the elites aren't doing so, Jiang says. Indeed, a Chinese official who has participated in meetings of the Public Security Bureau, whose job is to worry about threats to the state, says the bureau has demonstrated little concern about workers' protests, since they are atomized and thus can be easily co-opted or crushed.

THIS IS NOT to say Hong Kong couldn't prompt change in China—just not in the way many commentators have predicted. Since the handover from Britain to China in 1997, Hong Kong has barred all but the richest Chinese from immigrating. But, in recent months, it has relaxed its visa rules. Now, for the first time, a wider range of Chinese from neighboring Guangdong Province, where there have been many labor protests in recent years, can travel to Hong Kong, where they can access vibrant local media, learn about demonstrations across China, and potentially organize with other aggrieved workers.

Already, Lowu, the checkpoint between Hong Kong and Guangdong, has become one of the busiest border crossings in the world, and the *South China Morning Post*, Hong Kong's leading newspaper, reports that mainland job-seekers are flooding across the border into Hong Kong. In recent years, a few labor leaders from the mainland have traveled to Hong Kong to set up umbrella organizations dedicated to uniting workers in China, and some have begun to make contact with workers on the mainland. Eventually, their work may force the latte-sippers at Xintiandi to sit up and take notice. ■

## Why the public can stomach casualties in Iraq.

# Willpower

BY LAWRENCE F. KAPLAN

INCIDENTS LIKE LAST week's destruction of the U.N. headquarters in Baghdad, combined with the steady drip of American casualties, have prompted many opinion-makers to conclude the American public has had enough. "Those are good kids that we're sending into the shooting gallery called Iraq," noted *New York Times* columnist Bob Herbert, adding that his readers "have to be nursing the sick feeling that each death is a tragic waste, and this conflict is as much a fool's errand as the war in Vietnam." Nor is this reading confined to the op-ed pages. "[T]here are an awful lot of Americans who are kind of sleepless these days," presidential aspirant Howard Dean informed a crowd last weekend. "They are sleepless wondering whether their kid is going to be the next to die in Iraq." Complaining that American troops have become targets in Herbert's "shooting gallery," Ted Kennedy wants to know, "How do you console a family by telling them that their son or daughter is a casualty of the postwar period?"

But the casualties generated in Iraq's "shooting gallery" rile the likes of Dean and Herbert more than they do the public at large. Well before the first shot was fired, a mass of polling data suggested the country's willingness to tolerate battle deaths in Iraq exceeded even the figures predicted in

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

*The public can handle the Iraq fire.*

worst-case scenarios. In 1999, a massive opinion survey conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates for the Triangle Institute for Security Studies (TISS) asked people to name the highest number of American military deaths they would accept in a war to "prevent Iraq from obtaining weapons of mass destruction." The mean response: 29,853. A CBS News/*New York Times* survey last October found that 54 percent of respondents favored military action even in the event of "substantial" American casualties. Despite the failure to locate weapons of mass destruction, the war's bloody aftermath hasn't elicited much of an outcry, either. In the face of mounting casualties, 58 percent of those questioned in a July *Wall Street Journal*/NBC poll said American troops should stay in Iraq "as long as necessary to complete the process, even if it takes as long as five years." Another poll in July, this one for *The Washington Post* and ABC, found three in four respondents expected significantly more American deaths, yet seven in ten still believed U.S. forces should remain in Iraq "until civil order is restored there, even if that means continued U.S. military casualties." The most recent *Washington Post* survey, taken during the second week in August, shows the number of Americans who support the U.S. presence in Iraq—seven in ten—remains unchanged. Even a *Newsweek* poll taken in the aftermath of last week's U.N. bombing found that 60 percent of respondents support maintaining current force levels in Iraq for more than a year, with twice as many favoring staying ten years or more as supporting immediate withdrawal.

There is a story behind these numbers. In recent years, the public's unwillingness to tolerate combat deaths has become an article of faith for America's leaders. The first President Bush justified the decision to halt the Gulf war short of Baghdad on the grounds that doing otherwise would have entailed further American losses. President Clinton imbibed the same lesson after the October 1993 slaughter of crack American troops in Somalia, subsequently offering assurances to the public that any military action would endanger as few lives as possible. Clinton-era Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Hugh Shelton even devised a "Dover Test" for the use of force: "Is the American public prepared for the sight of our most precious resource coming home in flag-draped caskets into Dover Air Force Base?" According to the TISS data, the architects of U.S. foreign policy believe the answer is no. Seventy-eight percent of officers and a nearly identical percentage of their civilian counterparts agreed with the statement: "The American public will rarely tolerate large numbers of U.S. casualties in military operations." America's foes agree as well. Prior to the first Gulf war, Saddam Hussein insisted that Americans could never tolerate "ten thousand dead in one battle." For his part, Osama bin Laden boasted that the collapse of U.S. support for the operation in Somalia "convinced us that the Americans are a paper tiger." But those who insisted the American public has no stomach for casualties were wrong then, and they are wrong now. The real challenge for America's leaders will not be convincing the public to stay the course in Iraq. It will be convincing themselves.

THE PUBLIC HAS long been less fearful of casualties than America's political and military elites assume—and, for that matter, less fearful than the elites themselves. According to polls taken by the American Institute for Public Opinion (AIPO), the level of support for World War II never slipped below 75 percent, even though more than 200,000 Americans had been killed by mid-1945. World War II, of course, was the "good war." But the absence of a correlation between casualties and public support holds true even in more controversial conflicts. Survey data dating back half a century consistently shows that what determines the public's willingness to tolerate casualties has little do with casualties themselves.

Specifically, polls demonstrate that Americans will sustain battle deaths if they think the United States will emerge from a conflict triumphant, if they believe the stakes justify casualties, and if the president makes a case for suffering them. Each of these measures has important implications for the operation in Iraq. "The public is defeat-phobic, not casualty-phobic," Christopher Gelpi and Peter Feaver conclude in their forthcoming book, *Choosing Your Battles: American Civil-Military Relations and the Use of Force*, which culls a mountain of data to prove the point. In Korea, for example, an AIPO survey found that public support for the war in August 1950 was a sturdy 66 percent—despite the death of 5,000 American soldiers in the two-month-old war. By December 1950, however, that number had plummeted to 39 percent. Because of battle deaths? Probably not. Between November 1950, when Chinese forces intervened in the conflict, and the time of that survey, the United States suffered a series of devastating battlefield

ANATOLIAN/REUTERS/LANDOV

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

defeats. A few months later, once U.S. forces halted the Chinese offensive and launched their own, public support climbed—even as the number of American deaths passed the 20,000 mark. A 1994 RAND corporation study even concluded that the Korea toll "led not to cries to withdraw but to a desire to escalate."

Even Vietnam, where the myth of a risk-averse public was born, proves nothing of the kind. There, too, the public's sensitivity to casualties depended on its faith in the eventual success of the mission. And, prior to the Tet Offensive in 1968, that faith remained substantially intact. Despite the more than 10,000 Americans killed by then, numerous opinion polls taken on the eve of Tet found a clear majority favored either continuing or escalating the war. According to a Harris Poll, 31 percent of those surveyed in mid-1967 cited American casualties as the most disturbing feature of the war. But, in the aftermath of Tet, which the media portrayed as a major defeat, "the impact of casualties on support tripled in size," according to Gelpi and Feaver. Within a month, the percentage of those most troubled by American losses rose to 44 percent. Even so, those favoring a withdrawal from Vietnam never comprised a majority before the Nixon administration's decision to "Vietnamize" the war, when withdrawal became official policy.

*Can the soldiers trust the elites?*

Moreover, victory isn't the only source of public resolve in the face of battle losses—a fact that has become fairly obvious throughout the past decade. "[W]hen important interests and principles have been at stake, the public has been willing to tolerate rather high casualties," Eric Larson writes in his 1996 book, *Casualties and Consensus: The Historical Role of Casualties in Domestic Support for U.S. Military Operations*. "In short, when we take into account the importance of the perceived benefits, the evidence of a recent decline in the willingness of the public to tolerate casualties appears rather thin."

The paramount example of this tolerance was the 1991 Gulf war. As John Mueller's book *Policy and Opinion in the Gulf War* shows, American casualty estimates prior to Operation Desert Storm ranged into the tens of thousands. The public was well aware of these figures. A poll taken by the Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation on the eve of the ground war found that 67 percent knew about a Pentagon estimate forecasting 30,000 American deaths. Far from prompting a collapse in support, a Gallup Poll taken during the same period reported that a majority felt the Gulf crisis was worth going to war over, even if that meant up to 40,000 American deaths. Looking back at the polls, Larson details how the public's willingness to incur casualties derived from the promotion of a "number of foreign policy goals or principles in the Gulf that majorities of the public generally thought were very important"—among them, to deter further aggression by Iraq, to prevent Saddam from developing weapons of mass destruction, and to reverse Iraq's occupation of Kuwait.

Needless to say, the first Bush administration tirelessly advertised each of these interests—just as the present Bush administration mounted a p.r. offensive to explain to the country its reasons for going to war in Iraq. The point may seem obvious, but members of the public do not pinpoint vital interests by themselves; the president usually does it for them. Or doesn't. In Lebanon, for example, public support for the U.S. intervention *increased* after the 1983 bombing of the U.S. Marine barracks in Beirut. But, when President Reagan backed away from the operation, that support evaporated. Similarly, when 18 Rangers were killed in Mogadishu, NBC, ABC, and CNN polls found that 61, 56, and 55 percent, respectively, favored sending more troops to Somalia. That support, too, disappeared as it became clear the president himself no longer backed the mission. Numbers like these lead the Program on International Policy Attitudes' (PIPA) Steve Kull and Clay Ramsay, writing in the book *Public Opinion and the International Use of Force*, to conclude that "polls show little evidence that the majority of Americans will respond to fatalities by wanting to withdraw U.S. troops immediately and, if anything, are more likely to want to respond assertively." Neither Reagan nor Clinton, however, made use of the public's inclination.

REAGAN AND CLINTON may have been reticent because the group most likely to recoil from casualties happens to be the very elites who attribute the tendency to the public. The TISS survey found that military leaders consistently show less tolerance for casualties than civilian leaders, who, in turn, show less tolerance for casualties than the mass public. (In Iraq, for example, the TISS survey showed the public would tolerate, as a mean figure, 29,853 deaths, civilian elites would tolerate 19,045, and military elites would tolerate 6,016.) Hence, when policymakers use casualties as an excuse for inaction, Gelpi and Feaver argue, "they are either tying their own hands or responding to constraints imposed by the military." Tying their own hands because, among

EVAN VUCCI/EPA/LANDOV

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

civilian policymakers, assumptions about a battle-shy public and the steep political cost of casualties have been axiomatic ever since Vietnam. The "lessons" of Vietnam have also become canonical among senior officers, who fear that, as in Southeast Asia, they will be the ones blamed for battlefield losses. Nor, in the years since, have skittish commanders-in-chief or generals done anything to relieve that fear. On the contrary, they have instilled in the officer corps a zero-defect mentality, under whose terms casualties have become synonymous with failure. During the '90s, for example, the core mission of the Army's European Command was "To Protect and Take Care of the Force."

All this may seem like proof of heightened moral awareness on the part of America's leaders—and, in the sense that casualty-phobia translates into a greater concern for human life, it surely is. But, in other ways, it has ensnarled the United States in thorny dilemmas to which these same leaders have yet to provide an adequate response. The habit of advertising our fears as if they were virtues has emboldened the likes of bin Laden, Saddam, and Slobodan Milosevic. Closer to home, casualty-phobia has confused the military's mission and ethos, which is to defend the nation, not itself. It has also led to operations like Kosovo, in which civilians below paid the bill for orders that kept U.S. bombers safely above an altitude of 15,000 feet, and the 1998 missile attack on a pharmaceutical plant in Sudan, where the availability of risk-free weapons allowed the White House to employ force casually and without due reflection.

Fortunately, the Bush team has begun to jettison the elites' casualty obsession. To be sure, the White House has benefited from a hardening of public resolve in the aftermath of September 11, 2001. Before the war began in Afghanistan, for example, polls showed large majorities supporting military action even if it meant thousands of American deaths and a war that lasted years. Still, fearing casualties and a repeat of the Soviet misadventure in Afghanistan, Pentagon officials relied too heavily on proxies and air power. But, after the battle of Tora Bora, where the proxy strategy enabled hundreds of Al Qaeda operatives to flee the area, the United States reversed course, putting large numbers of troops on the ground. Nor did the administration bend when its risky thrust toward Baghdad cost the lives of as many as 20 Americans on a single day. Neither, for that matter, has the war's aftermath prompted any public second thoughts from the president. "There are some who feel like, that if they attack us, that we may decide to leave prematurely," Bush said last month. "They don't understand what they're talking about."

THE MAGIC QUESTION, of course, is whether the public agrees with the president. The evidence so far suggests that it does. To begin with, unlike Nixon in Vietnam, Reagan in Lebanon, and Clinton pretty much everywhere, the public trusts and approves of Bush's stewardship of postwar Iraq. A CBS News poll taken during the second week of August found that 57 percent approve of "the way George W. Bush is handling the situation with Iraq," while a *Newsweek* poll, taken after last week's bombing, put that number at 54 percent. "So long as the president is not panicking at the sight of casualties, neither will the public," says Feaver. Far from panicking, Bush has been criticized for excessive bellicosity—his "bring 'em on" taunt, for example. Perhaps not the wisest choice of words, but Bush's challenge to the Iraqi guerrillas did telegraph a certain resolve. Responding to the attack on the U.N. headquarters compound, he made the point more eloquently. The bombers, Bush said, "are finding that our will cannot be shaken. Whatever the hardships, we will persevere."

Second, according to the most recent polls, a majority continues to interpret restoring stability in Iraq as a vital national interest. Hence the 58 percent who told *The Wall Street Journal*/NBC survey that American troops should remain in Iraq for "as long as necessary, ... even if it takes as long as five years" and the 72 percent who told *The Washington Post*/ABC poll that they should stay in Iraq "until civil order is restored there, even if that means continued U.S. military casualties." This, despite the fact that 75 percent of respondents to *The Wall Street Journal*/NBC poll believe that "most of the challenges in Iraq remain ahead." Nor does the public have any illusions about the human cost this will entail. "There is a public perception that we cannot afford to lose in Iraq," says Andrew Krepinevich, the author of an influential book on counter-insurgency strategy and director of the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, "and the public's tolerance of casualties will be considerably stronger as a result."

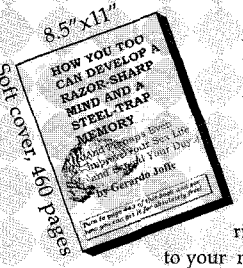
Bush's vulnerability comes from the growing number of Americans who see events going the wrong way on the ground. In the most recent CBS News poll, only 45 percent see "the United States in control of events taking place in Iraq"—a figure that has declined from 71 percent in April. Similarly, 53 percent of respondents to the latest PIPA survey think the "process of rebuilding Iraq is going 'not very well' or 'not at all well.'" These findings do spell trouble for the president. For public willingness to tolerate casualties remains as much a function of success as anything else. And, for the time being at least, poll respondents believe that the United States has yet to achieve it in Iraq.

How exactly, then, does the public measure success in Iraq? Opinion surveys point to America's ability to promote stability and democracy as two key tests. Of course, measuring order is easier than measuring democracy, and, given polls that show the public believes the United States has lost control of events there, it may also be the more important measure. Rampaging mobs, acts of sabotage, incendiary clerics, terrorist bombings—these are the sorts of things Americans can do without on the evening news. And, if the president intends to sustain public support, he will have to see that Iraq does without them as well. Even if that means more money, more troops, and, yes, more casualties. ■

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# PLEASE SELECT FROM THESE IMPORTANT BOOKS
## They May Change Your Life

8.5"x11"
Soft cover, 460 pages



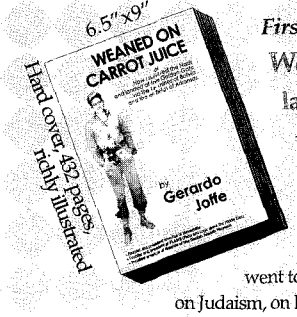

***Probably this year's most important self-improvement book...***

**How You Too Can Develop a Razor-Sharp Mind...** **Only $29.95***
**by Gerardo Joffe** *(*but see below for an **even better deal.**)*

It is scientifically proven: Your brain is like a muscle. Sit in front of the tube, preferably with a six-pack and a bag of potato chips and it will turn flabby and quite useless. Exercise it vigorously and you will indeed be able to develop a razor-sharp mind and a steel-trap memory. There may even be a bonus of better sex and longer life. And, finally, a rigorously exercised brain will not develop Alzheimer's disease. This breakthrough book will be your trainer and monitor to your new well-developed brain. (A $30 Haverhills gift certificate is bound into the book. So it's practically FREE. What a deal!)

**Sid Tuchman of Indianapolis, IN** says: *"What an astonishing book! One can almost hear those brain cells crackle!"* **Hugh Cunningham, DDS, of Albany, GA** says: *"This is marvelous! I already feel a whole lot smarter than before I immersed myself in Joffe's* ***16-Level Paradigm.***" And **Lloyd Hammett of Winnfield, LA** says: *"If this book will not make you smarter, nothing will."*

6.5"x9"
Hard cover, 432 pages, richly illustrated




***First there was <u>Duke of Deceptions</u>, then came <u>Angela's Ashes</u>, now, to top it all, comes...***

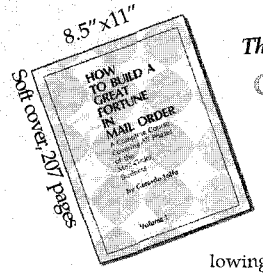
**Weaned On Carrot Juice *or* How I survived the Nazis and landed at the Golden Gate via the tin mines of Bolivia and the oil fields of Arkansas by Gerardo Joffe** **Only $29.95***
*(*but see below for an **even better deal.**)*

This is the riveting story of an adventurous, hazardous and ultimately successful life on three continents. The author escaped from Nazi Germany against all odds and on almost the last boat. His adventures in the tin mines of Bolivia, the corpse in the ore pass, the socks in the belfry, his rescue of a miner stuck in a shaft, the romantic love story with his wife, his founding of one of the nation's oldest and most successful mail-order companies, his invention of the birth control computer, the shaver that went to the moon, his introduction of the first electronic calculator, his becoming an important factor in philanthropy, and his reflections on Judaism, on Bolivia, on Germany, and the United States will keep you at the edge of your seat and spellbound from the first page to the last.

**Don Dible, Murrieta, CA,** author of best-selling **Up Your OWN Organization,** says: *Adventure, romance, hookers, and studs for hire ... Joffe is one hell of a story-teller. It's a page turner. You won't be able to lay it down.* **Bob Greenebaum** (publishing executive, retired), **Hillsborough, OR**: *...a story that is warm and humorous..., an absorbing picture of an extraordinary life...it is a wonderful book, a page turner if there ever was one.*

You can order this extraordinary book directly from the publisher, by mail, online at www.jomirabooks.com, by fax, or by toll-free phone.

8.5"x11"
Soft cover, 207 pages




***This course may lead you to a great future...***

**Get Rich in Mail Order (a 7-volume course)** **Volume I just $19.95***
**by Gerardo Joffe** *(*but see below for an **even better deal.**)*

Gerardo Joffe is president emeritus of Haverhills. He founded it in 1967. It's one of the oldest and most successful mail-order companies in the United States. He is an engineer and a Harvard MBA. In his 7-volume work, *How to Build a Great Fortune in Mail Order*, he gives a complete course on how to get started in this fascinating business, how to prosper in it, and how to build a great fortune in it. Volume I (207 pages) covers the following important topics: **Lesson 1** – *What the Mail-Order Business Is All About*; **Lesson 2** – *How to Get Started in the Mail-Order Business*; **Lesson 3** – *How to Organize Your Mail-Order Business*; **Lesson 4** – *Some First Thoughts About Mail-Order Merchandise.* There are also two important appendixes: **A** – *Components and Structure of a Mail-Order Offer*; **B** – *Your Chances for Success in the Mail-Order Business.* *There is also an "expanded" version. It costs $39.95 and includes a Workbook with all of the exhibits and a 3-Cassette Audiotape Set for studying at leisure while you drive. It is highly recommended. This is a continuity. Unless cancelled, you will get subsequent volumes at approximately six-week intervals. Even if you do not plan to go into the mail-order business, you will benefit greatly by the insights and revelations of this course. The course covers merchandising, advertising, marketing, customer service, retail store operations, financial and ratio analysis, syndication, data processing, and much more. The course is a virtual college education. Please, only credit card orders for this item.

***Our "special deal": BUY ANY 2 BOOKS AND GET ANOTHER ONE FREE!**
For instance: Buy a $29.95 book and a $19.95 book and get another $19.95 book FREE!

**Visit our website for more selection and great bargains – all self-improvement titles at minimum <u>25% discount!</u>**

For customer service, please call (415) 356-7801. For wholesale orders, ask for Chris Simpson at that same number. You may order by toll-free phone, mail, fax, or on the web and pay by check or Amex/Visa/MasterCard. Credit card orders only for "Get Rich in Mail Order." Add ship/ins. of $4.95 for one book or $9.90 for two or more books, plus sales tax for CA delivery. You have 30-day return. We do not refund shipping charges.

**Please give order code Y535**

**advance books**
**division of jomira/advance**
**470 Third St., #211, San Francisco, CA 94107**

***✆ Order by toll-free phone: (800) 600-2777 or (fastest!) by fax: (415) 356-7804 ✆***
***Many other great discounted self-improvement books online at www.jomirabooks.com***

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# BOOKS & THE ARTS

## STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

# Out West

WHAT ARE WE TO DO with Westerns nowadays? The question arrives with **OPEN RANGE**, which Kevin Costner directed and stars in alongside Robert Duvall and Annette Bening. Many sequences, many moments, are turned skillfully, and the look of the film is much of the time breathtaking. Yet, for its entire two hours and fifteen minutes, we merely watch it. It is there. We are here, regrettably objective.

**OPEN RANGE**
(Touchstone)

The screenplay by Craig Storper respects a matter noted by Robert Warshow, whether or not Storper ever heard of him. In 1954 Warshow published a once well-known essay called "The Westerner," in which he wrote: "The pattern is all. The proper function of realism in the Western movie can only be to deepen the lines of that pattern. It is an art form for connoisseurs, where the spectator derives his pleasure from the appreciation of minor variations within the working-out of an established order." Realism here denotes fidelity to a genre with personal embellishments, and Storper's script, drawn from a novel by Lauran Paine, takes Warshow's point precisely.

The body of the film is almost reverent of the genre. There is of course a heroine who apparently has been waiting all her life for the hero to come along. The main conflict, instead of dealing with water rights or ranchers versus farmers or other familiar issues, is over the right of free grazing in 1882. By this time property lines had been well established and the earlier right to graze freely along the way of a cattle drive was in dispute. Thus the basic struggle is between expansiveness—in key with this expansive landscape—and the new ethos of ownership and restriction.

The good guys are established early. Boss Spearman (Duvall) is the owner of the herd and is aided by his ten-year sidekick, Charley Waite (Costner). They have two hired hands, the burly and lovable young Mose and a lovable Mexican teenager called Button, plus a lovable dog. These three are so patently meant to be appealing that we know they are in for trouble, and we soon know what the trouble is. The outfit has reached a stretch of territory that has been bought by Denton Baxter (Michael Gambon), who also owns the local sheriff. Baxter orders Boss to move on. Boss knows his cattle may be stolen or stampeded if he refuses, but he insists on his right to free grazing. Then, when Mose is beaten up on a visit to town, the two opposing forces are locked in place for the eventual blast.

That final blast is the least satisfying sequence. All through the film there are references to past Westerns, and these, à la Warshow, are welcome. The finale is an echo of *Gunfight at the O.K. Corral,* but it doesn't come near the O.K. fight in clarity and tension. Why, at its start, do the opposing forces line up facing each other like football teams? Why does a braggart killer just let himself be shot? Why do the townsfolk join in the fray? The lines of combat become confusing, though of course the two good guys come through all right. (This is not tipping the end: anyone who will see the film, or even who won't, knows this in advance.) Still, we know that free grazing is doomed.

The love scenes, handled as well as possible by Costner and Bening, dwindle as they go. They are mostly talk—talk that strains so hard to be unconventional that we seem to hear it being typed in advance. Instead of evoking our compassion for the characters, it sometimes makes us compassionate for the actors who must speak it.

But *Open Range* achieves a lot. The very first shot makes us glad that the film exists. A long herd of cattle is crossing a magnificent valley in lovely light. (The splendid cinematography is by James Muro in his first major job. The outdoor settings are actually not the American West but western Canada.) This shot makes us remember that good Westerns realize landscape as an element in their thematic structure: it serves as a kind of moral background against which to judge the human activities. Two long sequences of *Open Range* were shot in pelting rain, which is a rarity in Westerns and which increase (Warshow's) realism. The heroine, instead of being a pretty young tinselly thing, is the fortyish sister of the town doctor, mature and dignified.

Then, of course, there are the horses. (The film doesn't do much with the cattle.) The horses are so beautiful and are ridden with such union of riders' purpose and horses' grace that we recognize how much we have missed this pleasure. Worth relishing, too, is the creak of the saddles, which almost lets us smell the leather. I remember seeing my first Western with sound, after many silent ones; what I heard most sharply, after the gunshots, was the creak of leather.

Most of the actors help the film greatly. The one disappointment is the most distinguished of them, Michael Gambon, as the Irish immigrant Baxter. He merely shouts throughout and therefore has little of the power that he has often shown elsewhere. Bening, whose loveliness benefits the person that she plays, does all that anyone could possibly do with a role that was patently fabricated to get a woman into the picture. Duvall breaks my heart. Almost every time he appears in a film (forget *Assassination Tango* and a few others), he is so easily commanding, so unostentatiously truthful, so suggestive of depths within, that I think of all the great classic roles that he has not played—on stage or screen—and could have done. As Boss, he is a seasoned force, shrewd and stubborn.

Costner has had a career more varied than we may remember. (One of his earliest roles was as the corpse at the start of *The Big Chill.*) He has rung true in seri-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ous parts (*The Untouchables, JFK*). He has looked better in a baseball uniform than any other film star (*Bull Durham, For Love of the Game*). He has an infectious passion for Westerns (*Dances with Wolves,* which he also directed; *Wyatt Earp,* which too had its O.K. Corral shootout). As Charley in this film, a man who long ago was a killer and who lives steadily with that knowledge, Costner has thoughtful strength. As director, except for the finale, he is cursive and clean, and he uses the landscape to lift the film into generic abstraction.

For Westerns, as has long been known, no matter how veristic they may seem, dwell at last outside verism. Warshow writes:

> The Western hero is necessarily an archaic figure; we do not really believe in him and would not have him step out of his rigidly conventional background. But his archaicism does not take away from his power; on the contrary, it adds to it by keeping him a little beyond the reach of common sense and of absolutized emotion, the two usual impulses of our art.

But it is exactly here that a problem arises. Time has in some measure passed both the Western and Warshow by. The archaicism persists; its relevance diminishes.

The Western was always drama simplified. It began in the nineteenth-century popular theater, where, as a type of melodrama, it pitted crystalline good against crystalline evil. Film added the motion and the scenery that made these simplicities even more welcome. What a relief it used to be to turn from the daily complications of character and morality to a terrain where such matters were plain. But the last half of this century, piled on top of its first fifty years, has made the Western's simplicities seem reductive, not clarifying. So, even when the work is as talent-touched as *Open Range,* we are left somewhat aloof. What we sense is not liberation through its clarity but nostalgia—for the way we used to feel about Westerns. ■

*Joseph Frank*

# Haman in Paris

## An old French play, an old French problem.

SURFING THE INTERNET ONE morning in June, I ran across a remark by an editor of the Israeli newspaper *Ha'aretz,* who had been asked which non-Muslim country at present exhibited the most anti-Semitism. He had distinguished very carefully between criticism of the current Israeli government and anti-Semitism, insisting that the former by no means involves the latter. But when asked to make a choice, he mentioned France as the European country in which this age-old plague now seemed to have the strongest roots. He did not refer to any specific incidents, and brought in the Dreyfus affair in the course of his comments; he also added that France had a very large Muslim population.

I was in the South of France when I read these words, in the picturesque city of Collioure, located at the foot of the Pyrenees in Catalonia. It had been the haunt of Matisse, Derain, and a host of other avant-garde painters, including Picasso, in the halcyon days before World War I. Collioure, its tumultuous history going back to Roman times, had once been under Spanish rule, and several years earlier I had noticed a little metal plaque on the walkway that ran along the side of the towering old wall, now part of the fortifications built by Vauban to guard the port. The plaque was placed underneath a sheet of metal perforated with holes and bent in a circular arc. A metal rod rising from the ground

*Joseph Frank is professor emeritus of comparative literature and Slavic languages and literature at Stanford University. The final volume of his Dostoevsky biography,* DOSTOEVSKY: THE MANTLE OF THE PROPHET, 1871–1881, *was published last year by Princeton University Press.*

**SALES TAX ON THE INTERNET?**
**Consumer Rights vs. Government Revenue**
A DISCUSSION PRESENTED BY
TNR/
*The New Republic's* Symposium on Public Policy
**WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2003**
**10:00 A.M.-NOON**
**CAPITOL HILL, WASHINGTON, DC**
David Baker
Vice President
Earthlink
Tod Cohen
Associate General Counsel
eBay
Mark Jaffe
Executive Director
Greater New York
Chamber of Commerce
Scott Peterson
Co-chair
Streamlined Sales Tax Project
**MODERATED BY THE NEW REPUBLIC'S SENIOR EDITOR JONATHAN CHAIT.**
To RSVP and for more information, please contact Sally Aman or Cheryl O'Donnell at (202) 508-4486.
**Sponsored by**
NetChoice
Convenience
Choice
Commerce

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

through one of the holes gave it the appearance of a sail and a mast. In Catalan and French, the plaque informed the public that from this very port the last of the non-converted Jews in the region had set sail in 1493, giving all their names as well as those of the ships on which they had embarked.

This part of France also served as one of the escape routes that were used by predominantly Jewish refugees to reach Spain during the early years of the Vichy regime. The refugees took back trails or pathways through the mountains, carefully reconnoitered in advance. If you drive along the winding coast road to the border at Port Bou, you come across a monument to Walter Benjamin, who swallowed poison when his party was initially refused entry into Spain. The French relation to the Jews is thus a checkered one, but there is evidence in the memoirs to indicate that the officially anti-Semitic policies of Vichy were often countered by local people.

Thoughts such as these came to my mind, but what I recalled even more vividly was an evening at the Comédie Française in Paris that, just the week before, my wife and I had attended with some French friends. We had gone to see a performance of Racine's play *Esther,* very rarely given and much less well known than several of his other plays. I am a great admirer of Racine, and over the years had taken every opportunity to see his work performed in Paris (sometimes with disastrous results when it got into the hands of avant-garde directors), but I had never seen *Esther* announced. Though I had not read the play before this performance, I knew the main outlines of the plot, of course, from the Book of Esther, which is the origin of the Jewish holiday of Purim. It depicts the rescue of the Jewish people from the threat of genocide; and when I saw the advertisement for the play I could not help wondering whether the staging of *Esther* at this time was merely coincidental. Who can say? The Comédie Française, after all, is an institution of the French government.

*ESTHER* IS ONE OF THE TWO BIBlical plays that Racine wrote (the other is *Athalie*) after he had officially retired from composing for the theater, despite the success of such earlier masterpieces as *Phèdre* and *Bérenice.* Instead, he became official historiographer of the reign of Louis XIV. Racine took up his poetic pen again at the request of Madame de Maintenon, the consort (and secret wife) of the king, who had established a school for the daughters of the nobility at St. Cyr and wished to see them educated according to the highest moral precepts.

Racine explains in his preface to *Esther* that whereas it was necessary to educate these young women in their duties and responsibilities, it was also felt necessary to offer them some diversion through literature. Reading and reciting aloud, he remarks, would help them to correct the provincial accents of their native regions. But alas, the majority of the best works in the French language dealt with profane subjects capable of leaving dangerous impressions on susceptible young sensibilities; and it was thus suggested that he employ his talents to create a new play in which verse and music would be blended in a subject free from the unhappy effects of most other literature. The result was *Esther,* subtitled "A Tragedy Drawn From Holy Scripture," first performed in 1689 before an audience of the king and members of the court.

All the roles were taken by the young pensioners of St. Cyr, even though several characters are male, and this convention continued to be honored in the performance that I saw. The cast was entirely women; and the music written especially for the play by Jean-Baptiste Moreau, which Racine praises in his preface, was performed by a small orchestra at the side of the stage. The group of young Israelite women that Esther gathers around her is specifically instructed to chant a good deal of the text; and their clear, fresh voices, some of a touching lyrical quality—they were singers in training with Radio France—added considerably to the emotional gravity of the performance. My friends, who had not been very encouraging about the Comédie, agreed that the evening was one of the finest they had recently spent in the Parisian theater, and the audience exhibited the same opinion; the entire cast was called back again and again to accept the ringing plaudits of the public.

The importance of the music in *Esther,* the liturgical aspects of the staging (complete with candles), and the piety expressed so movingly in the performance of the chorus—all this created the atmosphere of a religious service rather than a play. There was an attitude of hushed reverence in the theater that could be felt by everyone, as if the life of an entire people hung in the balance. In this respect, Racine placed the stamp of his own time and his own sensibility on the Old Testament narrative. Scholars have long noted that the text of the Book of Esther contains no reference to God, and as a result there was some question for a time about accepting it as part of Holy Writ; but this argument was long ago settled by the ancient rabbis. Racine, though otherwise closely following the original, constantly places the events that he is depicting within a religious framework whose ultimate moving force is the God of Israel.

The play begins with a scene between Esther, now queen of Persia, and a long-lost friend named Elise, who had thought her dead. Elise had been told by "a divine prophet" that Esther was now reigning in Suse, the capital of Persia, and she can only exclaim at Esther's stature: "The proud Assuerus [the Persian king] crowns his captive/And the glorious Persian is at the feet of a Jewess." Esther then explains how the king had chosen her after he put aside his former wife Vashti for having refused to obey one of his wishes. Esther had been raised by her uncle, "the wise Mardochee," a descendant, like herself, of "the ill-fated blood-line of our first king." He had urged her to appear before Assuerus with the other candidates competing for his favor; and she had done so, "concealing my race and my country." When the king, choosing her among all the others, put the queenly diadem on her head and distributed gifts throughout the kingdom in celebration, "what was in secret my shame and my chagrins." For while half the earth was submitted to her power, Jerusalem is now overgrown with weeds, Zion has become the home of "impure reptiles," the stones of its Temple have been dispersed, and "for the God of Israel the holidays have ceased."

Mardochee, who inconspicuously sits outside the walls of the palace, learns of a plot by "two ungrateful servants" to assassinate the king, and this information is purveyed to her royal master by Esther. Meanwhile, as she tells Elise, she has filled the palace with "daughters of Zion, young and tender flowers blown about by fate," though like herself their origins are unknown. Here she intends to educate them, far from any profaning influence, and in this way, "weary of vain honors and searching within myself/I come to humble myself at the feet of the Eternal." Attention then turns to the troupe of young girls, requested by Esther to sing

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

some of the songs in which "your voices, so often mingling with my tears, dwell on the sad misfortunes of Zion."

Esther's melancholy changes to horror when Mardochee enters, garbed in the sackcloth and ashes of mourning, to announce the terrible catastrophe that will soon occur. "The bloody Aman," the king's closest adviser, has persuaded him that the Jews are "held in horror by all of nature"; and the king has signed the extermination order Aman had prepared, to be executed in ten days. When Esther weepingly asks of God, "Have you of Jacob abandoned what remains?", Mardochee sternly says that tears are for children; it is up to her to save her people.

Even though she is the queen, the etiquette of the Persian court makes it a crime punishable by death for anyone to enter the king's presence without having been summoned. Esther thus fears for her life, and is rebuked by Mardochee when those of her people are at stake. "And who knows, when he [God] led your footsteps to the throne/If he were not guarding you to save his people." He then departs from the biblical narrative as Esther had before him, by introducing explicitly theological considerations: he goes on to praise the all-encompassing might of the God of Israel ("just at the sound of his voice the sea recoils, the sky trembles"). If he allowed for Aman's "criminal audacity/No doubt it was to test the fervor of your faith."

The next scene consists solely of a long monologue by Esther, a prayer, one of the high points of the play. Invoking "the holy alliance" between the God of Israel and his people, about which she had heard from her father "a thousand times," she laments that "the beloved nation has violated its faith ... giving to other gods an adulterous honor." Now they have become slaves, "but it is little to be a slave; one wishes to slaughter us all." The conquerors impute their triumphs to their own gods, and thus wish to abolish the God of Israel and his people from the face of the earth. In two lines that express the messianic link between Judaism and Christianity, Esther foresees how this disappearance would "snatch away from mortals the most precious of your gifts/The saint that you promised and whom we await." And now she asks her God to accompany her steps as she confronts the king: "The storms, the winds, the heavens obey you/Turn your fury at last against our enemies."

The second act takes place in the


**The Hebrew University of Jerusalem**

**The Mandel Institute of Jewish Studies**
**Scholion - Interdisciplinary Research Center in Jewish Studies**

**MANDEL SCHOLARS**

**TWO RESEARCH AND TEACHING POSITIONS in the fields of JEWISH CULTURE AND SOCIETY**

- The positions are intended for recent PhD's whose research record indicates excellence and promise of a leadership role in their disciplines.
- Positions offer preferential terms for research preparation for candidacy for permanent positions at the University. Salary will be commensurate with that of a lecturer, with an additional grant for research.
- The Positions are offered for a three-year duration, beginning October 1st, 2004.
- The selected candidates may lecture in English for the first two years.
- Qualified applicants will be invited for an interview and to present a guest lecture At the Hebrew University of Jerusalem on Thursday, January 8th, 2004.

**Last date for submission of applications: November 20, 2003**

**Further information and application forms:**
**Www.mandel-scholars.huji.ac.il**
**Tel: 972-2-588-1279 Fax: 972-2-588-1196**

**Fellowships at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study**

The Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University awards approximately thirty fully funded fellowships each year. Radcliffe Institute fellowships are designed to support scholars, scientists, artists, and writers of exceptional promise and demonstrated accomplishment who wish to pursue work in academic and professional fields and in the creative arts. Applicants must have received their doctorate or appropriate terminal degree by December 2002 in the area of the proposed project. Radcliffe welcomes proposals from small groups of scholars who have research interests or projects in common. Please check the Web site for more information.

The stipend amount is $50,000. Fellows receive office space and access to libraries and other resources of Harvard University. During the fellowship year, which extends from September 13, 2004, through June 30, 2005, residence in the Boston area is required, as is participation in the Institute community. Fellows are expected to present their work-in-progress and to attend other fellows' events.

**Applications must be postmarked by October 1, 2003.**
Visit www.radcliffe.edu for more information. For an application, contact:
Radcliffe Application Office • 34 Concord Avenue • Cambridge, MA 02138
617-496-1324 tel. • 617-495-8136 fax • fellowships@radcliffe.edu.

RADCLIFFE INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDY
HARVARD UNIVERSITY


LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

throne room of Assuerus. Hydaspe, Aman's confidant, notices that he is troubled. Why? Despite being the most powerful man in the king's realm, he is offended every day as he walks in and out of the palace because "a vile slave with an audacious look disdains and defies me." This "slave" turns out to be Mardochee, who even now, though covered with ashes and in rags, in "his glance preserved under the ashes the same pride." It is this defiance that has aroused Aman's wrath and impelled him to seek revenge, not only against Mardochee but against all the Jews as a demonstration of his power.

Racine's psychological finesse is displayed as he analyzes Aman's motives at length. Aman is not a Persian but an "Amalecite." In the Bible he is called the Aggagite, which establishes his genealogical link to Amalek, the desert tribe that infamously attacked the Israelites after the Exodus from Egypt. After the Amalecites were defeated, according to Racine, they emigrated to northern Greece. Racine's Aman was himself sold as a boy and brought to the Persian court. He has managed, as he says, "to rectify the injustice of my destiny"; but this makes Mardochee's refusal to submit to his superiority all the more galling. Hydaspe wonders whether Aman does not wish to take revenge on the Jews because they had decimated the Amalecites in the past, but Aman explains that, having risen so high, "my soul ... is only weakly touched by the interests of blood." It is the intransigence of Mardochee that he finds unbearable and which makes all his own grandeur "insipid"; the motivation is not one of race or revenge but of a wounded and insecure pride.

As a result, he denounces the Jews to Assuerus in terms that are all too familiar to students (and victims) of anti-Semitism, which Racine wonderfully undermines as he conveys Aman's words. "I invented colors, I gave arms to calumny/ I involved his glory; he trembled for his life." Aman depicts the Jews as threatening the peace of the Empire, as rich, powerful, and seditious, opposed to its laws, and who, "detested everywhere, detest all other men": these are the classical canards of anti-Semitism. Assuerus agrees to Aman's plan for their extermination; but in the next scene he is not concerned with this horrible event, still only in the offing, but with the actual and not imaginary threat against his life from which he was saved by Mardochee.

There is very little suspense or surprise as the action of *Esther* unfolds, but there is an effective use of an irony contained in the biblical version and dramatized in the play. The king is troubled because Mardochee has not yet been rewarded for saving his life. Learning that he is Jewish, the king can only marvel that "a Jew has preserved me from the sword of the Persians!/But, since he has saved me, whatever he is has no importance." The king then asks Aman how "a generous king should heap honors on a subject that he values." Aman believes the king is referring to his own services, which the text makes clear involved trampling on the law and exerting the utmost cruelty on the king's behalf. He thus outlines an honor that would in effect display him, in purple robes and wearing "a sacred diadem," as practically equal to the king. Assuerus, pleased by an extravagance that indicates the extent of his gratitude, orders Aman to parade Mardochee in the manner he had suggested.

But the king still clings to the decision he had taken about the Jews, "that odious race," under Aman's influence. Esther's terror at her unannounced intrusion in the king's presence causes her to faint; but he immediately expresses his tenderness and his concern, with an elegance of feeling and expression for which Racine has no rival. Asking her what she wishes, he assures her that her every desire will be granted. All she requests is that Assuerus and Aman come to dine with her the next day. The climax of the play, like the climax of the biblical text, comes at the banquet, at which the king expresses curiosity about the queen's origins. She finally confesses that "Esther, my lord, had a Jew for her father/Of your bloody orders you know the rigor." Shocked and horrified, the king yet allows Esther to speak without being interrupted by Aman; and she outlines the sad fate of the Jews since their conquest and dispersal.

> But their God, absolute master of
> the earth and the heavens,
> Is not such as error has displayed
> to your eyes;
> The Eternal is his name; the world
> is his creation!
> He hears the sighs of the humble
> that one outrages
> Judges all of mortals by an equal law.

The reign of merciful Assuerus, she shrewdly continues, had given new hope to the Jews; but "produced from the depths of Thrace/A barbarian came into these quarters to spread cruelty." Then Esther evokes the horror of the future moment when "everywhere the terrible signal given at the same time/With murders would fill the astonished universe." Far from posing a threat to Assuerus, the Jews were his faithful followers and prayed for him to their God, who had aided his conquests. Was it not a Jew who had saved his life—one who was her uncle? But Aman had already built a gallows at the gates of the palace, where Mardochee would be hung despite all the favors accorded him by the grateful king.

Aman, his power tottering, pleads to Esther for mercy, kneeling at her feet as he insists "that the interests of the Jews are already sacred to me," and that he "will repair the injury of my fatal error." But there is no Shakespearean "quality of mercy" in this world, as there is none in the original. Esther coldly replies: "The Jews expect nothing from an evildoer like you." Aman is hanged by the infuriated populace that he had abused, on the gallows that he had prepared for Mardochee. The play ends with Assuerus replacing Aman with Mardochee as his adviser and freeing the Jews from the "deadly yoke" to which they have been submitted. He urges them "to rebuild your temple, people your cities," and let their happy children forever remember his name with gratitude. The chorus then intones a series of verses praising the beauty and the courage of Esther, the greatness and the goodness of God, and the hope of the Jewish people to re-assemble in Zion again from the ends of the earth.

THE PLAYBILL HANDED OUT TO the audience of *Esther* was not so much an ordinary program as a brief, erudite account of the work in the context of its period. It noted that Louis XIV was very pleased with all the courtiers who made the pilgrimage to St. Cyr, and that the interest of the spectators was increased by the possibility of readings that could be referred to topical events. Assuerus's displeasure with "the haughty Vashti," who refused to obey his command, and her replacement by Esther was interpreted as a reference to the shift of Louis's affections from Madame de Montespan to the pious Madame de Maintenon. "It was impossible," we also read, "not to make the connection between the persecution of the Jews and the fate of the Protestants after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, or again the situation of the Jansenists to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

whom Racine was quite close." Not mentioned in the playbill, but suggested in the notes to the text of the play that I consulted, was that Esther's desire to devote herself entirely to the education of the Jewish girls she had assembled was taken as an allusion to Madame de Maintenon's commitment to St. Cyr. The attention of the French audience is thus directed to its own history, and the fate of the Jews is seen symbolically as referring to events that it might have been inappropriate for Racine to approach more directly.

The critic of *Le Monde*, who gave *Esther* a deservedly glowing review, remarked upon this tendency of French scholarship to interpret the play in the context of the period without paying any attention to the Jewish theme itself. Louis XIV had renewed an order of the fourteenth century expelling the Jews from France: ninety-three families were told to leave in 1684, and the critic cites anti-Semitic utterances from both Malherbe and Bossuet (whom Racine invited to two performances of the play). So what could have caused Racine to choose such a subject? Could he have received the approval of Madame de Maintenon, who had received a Calvinist upbringing? Nobody knows, and perhaps such questions cannot be answered; but in fact they have never been seriously investigated.

Surely no one today can read Racine's play without thinking more of the Shoah than of the Protestants or the Jansenists. And there is no other great classical work in any other European literature, so far as I know, that so directly attacks, repudiates, and scorns the anti-Semitic accusations that always have been, and continue to be, leveled against the Jews, not least in France. Nor is there any other work that so exalts the God of Israel as a God of justice and of love, or looks forward so poignantly to the restoration of the Jewish people to their ancient homeland. The plea for tolerance in Lessing's *Nathan der Weise*, which was produced two centuries later, cannot hold a candle to Racine's play. One has to wait for *Daniel Deronda* to find so pro-Jewish a major work; but George Eliot's novel, great as it is, does not pose the issue as starkly as the French master's play, nor can the novel form rise to the sublimely expressive heights achieved by his poetry.

Racine's plays are one of the glories of French literature, and presumably they still form a part of the school curriculum in France. To what extent *Esther* was taught and read over the years, and how it might have been expounded, I cannot say. Proust's Albertine reels off citations from the play that she had learned in her convent school, and my wife recalls memorizing the Prayer of Esther like all the sixth graders of her time. Those who impugn French culture for its rampant anti-Semitism—and God knows it has contained enough since the French Revolution tore down the gates of the European ghettos (which might also be kept in mind!)—should be asked if they have read *Esther*. But, alas, one great work of art can hardly serve as an impregnable barrier against the forces of religious and political hatred. ■

*James Wood*

# Making It New

BRICK LANE
By Monica Ali
*(Doubleday, 369 pp., $25)*

IN THE LAST TWENTY YEARS, British and American fiction has been renewed by what might be called the immigration of content. In America, this useful novelty has tended to result from the inevitable hyphenation of the once apparently stable monad of Americanness (Cuban-American fiction, Puerto Rican–American, Asian American, and so on). In Britain, the vast centrifuge of empire has more often resulted in fiction set outside Britain, or, when set in Britain, fiction explicitly about immigration. Hyphenation has been, for immigrants, a trickier train to catch in Britain than in the more hospitable United States.

Plenty of readers, critics, and academics have been grateful for the augmentation of material, the opening of "colorful" worlds, not to mention the at times radical literary techniques, that this new life has brought to fiction. At such times the etymology of the word "novel" is always mentioned, and Ezra Pound's definition of literature as "news that STAYS news" is reliably invoked. What is not so often said is that this new material has another and perhaps more momentous service to perform, which is to return fiction to its nineteenth-century gravity. This it does by re-importing into the Western novel traditional societies, with their ties of marriage, burdens of religion, obligations of civic duty, and pressures of propriety—and thereby restoring to the novel form some of the old oppressions that it was created to comprehend and to resist and in some measure to escape. This was the case with Vikram Seth's massive panorama *A Suitable Boy*, and it is the case with Monica Ali's splendid first novel.

Ali's novel brings with it the undeniable fascination of novelty. Nazneen, a poorly educated eighteen-year-old Muslim girl from a traditional village in Bangladesh, is plucked by arranged marriage from the only place that she has known to a grim housing estate in the east end of London, where she must live with her much more literate, patchily anglicized forty-year-old husband. The miserable shock of immigration to Britain has been touched on by other writers—Naipaul, Rushdie, the Sri Lankan novelist Romesh Gunesekera—but no writer I know of has taken as her entire stretched subject the loneliness and the shabby poverty of these English near-ghettos. This is the world of sweatshops and their grim women doing piecework on sewing machines, and residents looking down on gray concrete courts from the fifteenth floor of subsidized housing, and busy gangs of Bangladeshi youths, some radicalized by Islam, some stunned by drug addiction. Zadie Smith's multicultural north London was a fictional universe that readers wanted to visit, in part because it was new to them and in part because it was so essentially cheerful; but Ali's fictional world is shockingly monocultural—it contains only Bangladeshis who by choice and by necessity keep to themselves—and it is far from cheerful, even if her book is frequently comic.

This expansion of vision is the traditional benefit of new fictional material, and there is plenty of it here. (One of the characters, for instance, receives "salaat alerts" on his cell phone, regular reminders of prayer times from a commercial Islamic calling service.) But the novelty

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of Ali's world is also a restoration, for it allows her, quite naturally, to inhabit a fictional realm in which prayer, free will, and adultery all have their antique weight. Take adultery, for instance: once the great motor of the novel, it is now an idle cylinder, only formulaically or nominally used to give plot a bit of a lift. Adultery has withered as a fictional theme because it drags such little consequence behind it nowadays. In nineteenth-century fiction, by contrast, adultery was literally used *by* plot: it had weight by virtue of its place in a system of shame, punishment, desire, escape, and imprisonment, and to set it ticking was to set that system ticking, too.

So it is intensely gripping and involving when young Nazneen, who disliked her husband in the early years of their marriage and has only begun to tolerate his presence, finds herself distracted by desire for a young Bangladeshi Londoner, and begins an affair with him. For quite apart from the absolute censure of the community, Nazneen, who is a faithful Muslim, herself is certain that she will burn in eternal hell for her sin. Likewise, Ali's treatment of free will and determinism draws power from the fact that the novel's protagonist devoutly believes in fate. When Razia, her best friend in London, asks why her husband complains so much about Britain if his life there is better than it would be in Bangladesh, Nazneen has no answer: "She was in this country because that was what had happened to her. Anyone else, therefore, was here for the same reason." Again, some of the plottiness of nineteenth-century fiction was owed not merely to literary convention but also to the fact that many novelists believed in determinism, which was both obeyed and resisted by many heroes and heroines (especially the latter). Fictionally speaking, it takes a good deal of enactment, a good deal of story, for determinism to enact itself—for readers to feel that plot is being, as it were, rubbed into the very souls of the characters.

Ali's most daring decision may be her bestowal of what amounts to semi-literacy upon her heroine. Nazneen is not semi-literate, of course; but her abrupt arrival in London—a girl who had never seen much more than her village—and her inability at first to speak any English render her so in Britain. Ali keeps her narrative very close to Nazneen's; we are never given independent access to any other character in the book; our sense of everything is passed through this heroine's impressions. Thus all the new information that we learn about this world, and indeed about the London world, is Nazneen's information, approached as she approaches it. We have become so used to the idea that new information is a chance for the writer to show off a bit, to tell us how much he knows (goodness, he really does know so much about real estate in North Dakota!), so used to the idea of information as a part of writerly style, a ripple of style's muscles, that it comes as a refreshing shock to encounter new information through what is a kind of anti-style.

BUT IT IS NOT, IN FACT, AN ANTI-style; it is the suppression of obvious authorial style in the interest of a character's style. (And so it is the greatest style.) The result is a lovely simplicity, as we are led to inhabit the wide-eyed ignorance of a village girl from Bangladesh, and to watch it develop itself. Early in the book, Nazneen sees a few minutes of ice-skating on television without understanding what she is watching. Ali refrains from telling her or us what it is; we are to undergo the almost hermeneutic process of finding out:

> A man in a very tight suit (so tight that it made his private parts stand out on display) and a woman in a skirt that did not even cover her bottom gripped each other as an invisible force hurtled them across an oval arena. The people in the audience clapped their hands together and then stopped. By some magic they all stopped at exactly the same time. The couple broke apart. They fled from each other and no sooner had they fled than they sought each other out. Every move they made was urgent, intense, a declaration. The woman raised one leg and rested her boot (Nazneen saw the thin blade for the first time) on the other thigh....

This passage may not look like anything much, until one realizes the care with which Ali makes Nazneen notice everything except what would have been most obvious to a Western watcher: that this is ice-skating. Nazneen sees instead the immodest private parts, the people clapping and suddenly not clapping at the same time (a brilliant touch—the staged decorum of such audiences must indeed seem a strange thing to one who has never witnessed it before), the free and erotic intensity between man and woman (Nazneen, by contrast, has recently overheard her husband Chanu telling a friend on the phone that his wife is "an unspoilt village girl" whose eyes are rather too close together, and "a good worker"), and finally, only then, the "thin blade" on the boot.

Seeing everything through Nazneen's eyes returns the gift of "estrangement" (as the Russian formalists used to call it) to fiction. Everything must be made new, in a halting sojourn of discovery. This becomes Ali's systematic procedure in the novel—refreshing and often wonderful in itself, and also of course succeeding in bringing us closer to Nazneen's travails and triumphs. A walk in the streets—the novel gets its title from a street in the borough of Tower Hamlets famous for Bangladeshi restaurants—is an oceanic voyage for Nazneen, at least in her early months in Britain. She sees many people dressed like her, in saris or in punjabi pajamas and skullcaps, but then her eyes alight on a differently dressed pair, "in short dark skirts with matching jackets. Their shoulders were padded up and out. They could balance a bucket on each side and not spill a drop of water." Thus she discovers shoulder pads. (It is 1985.)

One day Nazneen strays from her familiar rounds, and wanders towards the financial district of London. She sees a pair of schoolchildren, "pale as rice and loud as peacocks," and comes to a stop at the foot of a vast glass tower.

> The entrance was like a glass fan, rotating slowly, sucking people in, wafting others out.... Every person who brushed past her on the pavement, every back she saw, was on a private, urgent mission to execute a precise and demanding plan: to get a promotion today, to be exactly on time for an appointment, to buy a newspaper with the right coins so that the exchange was swift and seamless, to walk without wasting a second and to reach the roadside just as the lights turned red.

As a writerly description of a bustling London crowd, this may at first seem flat—where are the theoretical riffs on crowds, the slicing metaphors, the brilliant details? Until, again, one realizes that what has been beautifully captured, without any authorial commentary, is Nazneen's massive naïveté. There is the marvelous image of the revolving door seen

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

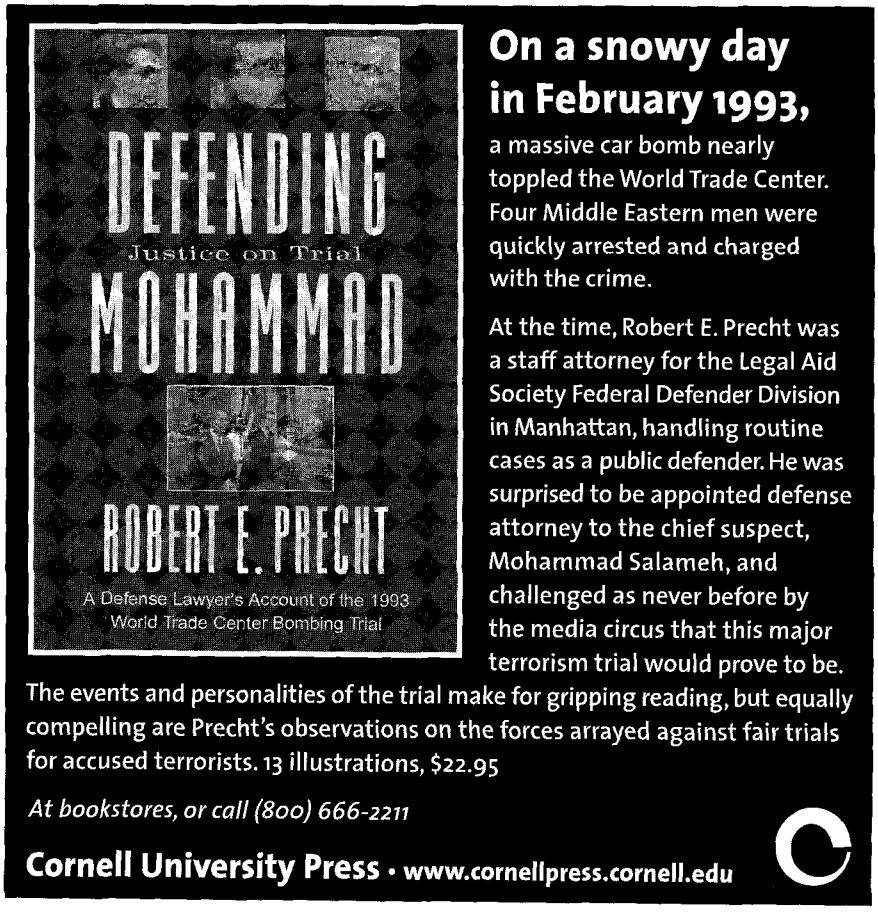
as a massive fan—why should she have ever seen one of these doors before?—and then there is the almost childish certainty that because everyone is moving urgently on the street, each person is executing "a precise and demanding plan." And great subtlety is used in the fleshing out of Nazneen's idea of what constitutes such a plan: "to be exactly on time for an appointment" or "to reach the roadside just as the lights turned red."

But Nazneen is not simply a vessel for estrangement, vivifying as this effect is. The power of Ali's book is the way in which it charts its heroine's slow accumulation of English, her gathering confidence as a mother and a wife, and the undulations of her marriage to a man whom she eventually learns to respect and perhaps even to love. Again, this arc is traced in the subtlest ways. When Nazneen's first child dies in the hospital, the name of his illness is never given; we are told merely about "the rash" that brought him to the emergency room, "those little red seeds." This is in perfect accord with Nazneen's own linguistic and medical competence; she has barely learned the word "hospital," after all. So it comes as a pleasant shock, a measured gratification, when, a hundred or so pages and eight years later, Ali refers casually to one of Nazneen's daughters having been in the hospital with "tonsillitis." The daughters have taught their mother English, and her confidence, linguistic and medical, has grown.

Yet even when Nazneen has learned something, Ali takes care to show how her knowledge is framed in ignorance. Halfway through the book, when Nazneen has already experienced all kinds of instruction in life, she wanders down Brick Lane, and notices the differences between the cheap restaurants and the expensive ones (not that she has ever set foot in the latter): "The tables were set far apart and there was an absence of decoration that Nazneen knew to be a style." "Knew to be a style": that is all. Nothing more. Because that is all that Nazneen does know. She could not expatiate on what we call minimalism; she has merely been long enough in London to recognize a style. (An absence of decoration that is yet a style might also be an apt characterization of Ali's prose.) Think how often fancy restaurants are described in metropolitan fiction, and in such knowing waves of sarcasm! By contrast, such simplicity on Ali's part, such authorial reticence coupled with such authorial sympathy, is a strenuous achievement.

NAZNEEN'S MARRIAGE IS AT the heart of this book, and Chanu, her husband, is its other leading character. He is a Biswas figure—earnest, probably more self-educated than formally schooled (he has a degree, or so he says, from Dhaka University), restless, yearning, and vulnerable, desperate to escape but tied to his destiny by the modesty of his ticket. Almost as soon as he is married, he longs to return to Bangladesh, to remove his family before they can be "spoiled" by British ways, and his constant invocation—"by then we could be in Dhaka"—has a canonical, not to say Russian, mournfulness. He is of course a stranger to Nazneen when they marry: a plump, not very attractive middle-aged man who works for the local council and dreams of a promotion that, we know, will never come his way. About the marriage, Ali is devastating: "In all her eighteen years, she could scarcely remember a moment that she had spent alone. Until she married." Nazneen is wary of Chanu at first, and loathes the physical impositions of their union—she has to cut his corns and his hair; and it is not until their son dies and Chanu becomes a real companion that she realizes that although she does not love her husband, he is a good man, worthy of respect. A hundred pages elapse before we witness physical tenderness or even shared laughter.

Since the fine comic-pathetic lineage of Biswas sits so obviously behind Chanu, he can at times seem only a recognizable type, even a somewhat literary one; and Ali does not really deepen him as the novel progresses. Just as Mr. Biswas corresponded with something called the Edgware School of Journalism, so Chanu keeps framed certificates on his wall, including one from Morley College, where he attended evening classes on nineteenth-century thought—though, as he explains to Nazneen, the college did not actually give him a diploma: "it's just directions to the school, but that's all they gave out. No certificates." She subtly captures his vulnerability and his bombast in scene after scene. Chanu invites Dr. Azad, the local physician and the most "respectable" Bangladeshi he knows, to supper, and at one point remarks, painfully, that "we intellectuals must stick together." But when Dr. Azad's fierce


DEFENDING
Justice on Trial
MOHAMMAD
ROBERT E. PRECHT
A Defense Lawyer's Account of the 1993 World Trade Center Bombing Trial

**On a snowy day in February 1993,**

a massive car bomb nearly toppled the World Trade Center. Four Middle Eastern men were quickly arrested and charged with the crime.

At the time, Robert E. Precht was a staff attorney for the Legal Aid Society Federal Defender Division in Manhattan, handling routine cases as a public defender. He was surprised to be appointed defense attorney to the chief suspect, Mohammad Salameh, and challenged as never before by the media circus that this major terrorism trial would prove to be.

The events and personalities of the trial make for gripping reading, but equally compelling are Precht's observations on the forces arrayed against fair trials for accused terrorists. 13 illustrations, $22.95

*At bookstores, or call (800) 666-2211*

**Cornell University Press** · **www.cornellpress.cornell.edu**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

wife interrogates poor Chanu, he retreats into incoherence. Chanu has claimed, in his usual pontifical way, that "to be an immigrant is to live out a tragedy." But Dr. Azad's wife will have none of it:

> "What are you talking about?"
> "The clash of cultures."
> "I beg your pardon?"
> "And of generations," added Chanu.
> "What is the tragedy?"
> "It's not only immigrants. Shakespeare wrote about it."

Chanu is a defeated man, despite his rhetoric, or because of it; and one of the funniest and saddest scenes occurs when he returns home one day with a computer. He gathers Nazneen and his two daughters around him, and proceeds to write something: "he examined the keyboard closely before each stroke, putting his face right down by the letters as though something valuable had slipped between the cracks. Minutes later he had completed a sentence.... 'Dear Sir, I am writing to inform you.' 'It all comes back so quickly,' said Chanu, in English. His cheeks were red with pleasure."

There is much satisfaction to be had from the gentleness and the tact with which Ali animates this boisterous and anxious man: "Only his eyes were unhappy. What are we doing here, they said, what are we doing on this round, jolly face?" As Nazneen's affection for him develops, so does ours: "He came next to her and leaned on the radiator. If there was a solid surface in sight, Chanu would rest against it. Mental toil, he said. That is the real exercise. No harder work than mental toil." Ali subtly catches Chanu out without semaphoring her satire. Thus Chanu repeatedly refers to the Open University (a state-funded extramural university where he began but did not complete a course) solecistically as "Open University," without the usual definite article. Even as the book ends, Chanu says to his wife, "The English have a saying: you can't step into the same river twice." His ignorance is gently undisturbed by the author.

Into this precarious marriage comes the violent disruption of Karim, a young activist, prominent in the local Islamic group the Bengal Tigers. Nazneen, given a sewing machine by Chanu, has started doing piecework, and Karim is the middleman whose task is to collect and to deliver her work. Karim is the opposite of Chanu: he is young, good-looking, apparently invulnerable. He saunters around Nazneen's flat, chatting on his cell phone (it is he who receives the "salaat alerts"), putting his feet up on the coffee table, and marking the space with his erotic spoor. Nazneen cannot keep her eyes off him: "When Chanu fidgeted he showed his unease. When Karim could not be still, he showed his energy." Despite her dread of the sin of adultery, Nazneen starts an affair with Karim, a relationship that precisely substitutes for the lack in her marriage: it is strongly physical, and Nazneen is indeed in love. A measure of her loneliness, in this deeply traditional society, is provided when she tries to tell her friend Razia about it. Razia's son has been discovered to be a drug addict, and thinking that one misfortune might be traded for another, Nazneen halteringly unburdens her secret. But Razia cuts her short. "You don't have to tell me," say Razia. "Just because I am in trouble, you don't have to make trouble for yourself as well." In this world, the economy of moral survival renders the lavish expenditure of "confession" mute. Razia is an unconventional Muslim woman—later she will listen to the full story of the affair—but Ali captures the sense that merely to hear such news is to be tainted with it.

Interestingly, Nazneen's religiousness in some way enables, rather than arrests, her sinful relationship. For once she has decided that she will burn in hell for eternity, there seems nothing to do except submit to fate and continue sinning: she is utterly lost anyway. Calvinism provides the Christian version of this kind of predestination, and James Hogg's *Confessions of a Justified Sinner* is the famous fictional commentary. Nazneen's Islamic serfdom to fate is a good deal calmer than the Calvinist enslavement, and besides, it has a strong personal dimension: Nazneen has always believed in such submission, partly because, as her grandmother liked to tell her, when Nazneen was born she almost died, and her mother, ignoring pleas to take the baby to the hospital, left her to survive or die, with the words: "We must not stand in the way of Fate. Whatever happens, I accept it. And my child must not waste any energy fighting against Fate. That way, she will be stronger."

THE FAMILY STORY OF HOW Nazneen Was Left To Her Fate has been endlessly repeated. (And it provides a rather too neat frame for the narrative theme.) Nazneen grew up believing that "what could not be changed must be borne. And since nothing could be changed, everything had to be borne." Her sister Hasina had fought fate by running off with a lover when she was a teenager. Her subsequent tribulations, which include prostitution, have not inclined Nazneen to think highly of the liberation from fate. (Hasina's letters to Nazneen punctuate the novel.)

The struggle of the novel concerns Nazneen's capacity to struggle with her own fatedness, and this struggle will gather around the question of whether she should leave her husband (now not only determined to leave for Dhaka, but with a date in mind and tickets in hand) and marry Karim. Chanu, it is quietly suggested, knows about the affair or strongly suspects, and characteristically he shows both his strength and his weakness in his response. He does nothing, except to become markedly sweeter to his wife and children. In one of the finest scenes, Chanu decides that the family deserves a holiday, an outing. They get on the bus to see the sights—the reader registers with a shock that in more than ten years of married life in London, Nazneen has never seen Buckingham Palace or the Houses

## Sandlot & Tenderloin

I hooked my fingers through the cyclone fence
and watched the mound and listened to the chatter.
*The tufted infield gave not one true bounce;*
the rutted basepaths held wands of rainwater.

And when I came to that other landscape,
a body as familiar as my own,
the breathlessnesses of its swell and dip,
velleities of pleasure and aversion,

I wonder what possessed me to look back
and see him at a window where he was,
spreadeagled by his hunger and a trick
of light through the drawn shades and watching us.

**KARL KIRCHWEY**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of Parliament, has never been to central London. As the family sits on the grass at St. James's, eating the picnic provided by Nazneen, Chanu says unexpectedly, "You know, when I married your mother, it was a stroke of luck." *Brick Lane* is full of unobtrusive patterning, and Chanu's chivalrous admission comes as a surprise not only because it is one of the few compliments Chanu has uttered to his wife, but also because it inverts, for the first time, his usual mantra, which is to remind Nazneen again and again of how lucky she is to have married "an educated man." Nazneen, meanwhile, is thinking about Karim, and trying to sort out in her head how much Chanu knows.

*Brick Lane* is a great achievement of the subtlest storytelling—the kind that proceeds illuminatingly, in units of characters rather than in wattage of "style." There is, of course, a great deal of literary style in this book, and Ali is quite capable of fine similes and metaphors. She has a sharp satirical sentence on how the radical boys at the Bengal Tigers meetings are dressed: "The boys wore jeans, or tracksuits with big ticks [i.e., check marks] on them as if their clothing had been marked by a teacher who valued, above all else, conformity." Or this, on the arrival of politicians to the housing estate after a race riot: "Politicians came and walked around the estate with their hands behind their backs to show that they were not responsible, leaning forward slightly to indicate that they were looking to the future." Though Nazneen is watching the Nike-daubed boys and the politicians, this is clearly not her language; Ali allows herself the freedom to disengage every so often from Nazneen's perceptions. But the bulk of the book is occupied by the unforgettable Nazneen; she is Ali's quarry, and the great prize of the prose is the way it subdues itself to her fears, her ignorance, her triumphs, and finally her comprehension. The novel's ending is wisely ambiguous. Nazneen does not escape her fate, or even necessarily resist it, but she understands it. Life has been her Morley College. ■

*Eugene D. Genovese*

# God Without Thunder

AMERICA'S GOD: FROM JONATHAN EDWARDS TO ABRAHAM LINCOLN
By Mark A. Noll
*(Oxford University Press, 622 pp., $35)*

THOSE WHO TODAY MOST VEHEMENTLY protest religious display in public life usually refer to America's plurality of faiths. It is certainly true that many religions have flourished here, but these impassioned protests obscure the long-undisputed centrality of Protestant Christianity to America's society and politics. In late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century America, Mark A. Noll writes, "Republican and Protestant convictions merged as they did nowhere else in the world." This contention grounds Noll's magisterial book, in which the merger's impact on theology figures as "a central theme." As Protestantism "adapted to modernizing, rational, and market-oriented societies," a transcendent, self-contained God became immanent and relational. This uniquely American synthesis of evangelical Protestantism, republicanism, and commonsense moral reasoning endured because its "morally powerful if conceptually vague concepts" appealed across ideological and political lines.

The wonderfully prolific Noll—as fine a historian as America now boasts—offers a rich and learned and deeply thoughtful magnum opus that is destined to shape discussions of the history of American religion and politics for a long time. His incisive and readable account of the developments within American Christianity from the early eighteenth century to the middle of the nineteenth century shows that a peculiarly American "Christian republicanism" retained the Puritan conviction of a God who directly punishes evil and rewards virtue, but that under the impact of the doctrinal "sea changes" after 1750, evil increasingly became "vice" and piety "virtue." Noll skillfully recounts the privatization of the republican conception of virtue and its transformation into an egalitarian cult of unrestrained competition and self-gratification. He renders difficult doctrinal material accessible to the general reader without vulgarization of content.

When American religious leaders—unlike their monarchist European counterparts—spoke and acted as republicans, they profoundly affected the ideology and the politics of an emerging country. No less portentously, they adopted eighteenth-century Scottish "commonsense" moral philosophy, which Noll well characterizes as "ethics self-consciously grounded upon universal moral instincts." Commonsense reasoning rescued Protestants who wanted to preserve traditional forms of Christianity without having to appeal to traditional religious authorities. This proved costly, as Noll demonstrates. Morality became the foundation of Christianity, rather than the reverse. As a result, the authority of religion waned along with the mystery of the sacred. Noll's carefully honed and finely detailed account of the disastrous transformation of Christian doctrine into ethical philosophy alone establishes the indispensability of this remarkable book, though it is only one of its many achievements.

The American Revolution rent the churches and generated "an intimate union between evangelical Protestant religion and Revolutionary politics." There followed a transformation that began with a process of evangelization or "re-Christianization," but ended with what some critics consider a slow but inexorable secularization of American Protestantism. Noll agrees with Gordon Wood that as the new republic became democratized, it became evangelized: "The rise of evangelical Christianity in the early republic is, in some measure, a story of the success of the common people in shaping the culture after their own priorities rather than the priorities outlined by gentlemen." Noll draws especially on the arresting work of Daniel Walker Howe to argue that republicanism informed American political life from the years after the Revolution to secession. In general, his point brooks no objection, but he occasionally stretches it so far as to invite confusion. The republicanism of Jeffersonian farmers and Jacksonian artisans

*Eugene D. Genovese is the author most recently of* A CONSUMING FIRE: THE FALL OF THE CONFEDERACY IN THE MIND OF THE WHITE CHRISTIAN SOUTH *(University of Georgia Press).*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

differed critically from that of the Federalism of New England merchants and low-country Southern planters and the commercially minded Whigs who followed them.

*America's God* is a reviewer's nightmare. The range of Noll's scholarship and the boldness of his interpretations tempt one to devote this limited space to pursue quarrels rather than to acclaim an extraordinary achievement. To succumb to such a temptation would be to do Noll a grave injustice. But I intend to commit this injustice—confident that Noll, who is candid about his own Christianity in an affecting preface to his book, will forgive me.

Noll displays a disquieting tendency to hedge his finest insights. Protestant evangelicals, he trenchantly observes, "were creating not a single Christian America but Northern and Southern versions of the godly republic." Yet he does not elucidate clearly the differences between the right's constitutional republicanism and limited democracy and the left's radical republicanism and majoritarian democracy. He convincingly argues that Southerners invoked earlier forms of republican values and that the Southern interpretation of republican freedom neither became as democratic as the Northern one nor so firmly accentuated individual spiritual rights. Good Yankee that Noll is, he cannot resist caricature and thinly veiled sarcasm when he reduces the Southern idea of freedom to the privilege of acting in one's rank in organic communities protected by "benevolent patriarchs."

*America's God* features a civil war between "proponents of alternate versions of the same ideology made up of evangelical religion, republican political principles, and commonsense moral reasoning." Yet Noll acknowledges that the South remained closer than the North to "the deferential, class-stratified, and socially organic" republicanism of the eighteenth century. Southerners tended to view "commercial individualism as the enemy of republican liberty." Noll's acute recognition of "alternate versions" trips over his reservations. The problem arises from his acceptance of Lincoln's grand but historically dubious assertion that Northerners and Southerners "read the same Bible, and pray to the same God." Southerners did not think so. James Henley Thornwell and George Frederick Holmes, among others, foreshadowed J. Gresham Machen's powerful work *Christianity and Liberalism,* published in 1923: they charged liberals with espousing an essentially different religion.

By any reasonable standard Noll qualifies as an orthodox Christian, but his palpable yearning for Christian unity leads him to squirm when he confronts deep doctrinal differences. In a quest to minimize such differences, Noll seems to concur with George Marsden's interpretation of the New School Presbyterians as, in the main, theologically orthodox. He regrets the abandonment of the Plan of Union that established close links between Presbyterians and Congregationalists. The plan opened Presbyterian and Congregational churches to each other's ministers, but many Congregationalists did not subscribe to the Westminster Confession, which enshrined Calvinist orthodoxy. Hence, the orthodox Old School Presbyterians viewed the plan as a Trojan horse packed with theological backsliders. Grimly, Noll muses that "Calvinists got down to the serious business of beating up each other" during America's "greatest" but "most self-destructive era" of Christian theology—its "golden age" and its "self-immolation."

An irritated Noll refers to the Presbyterian Church's "draconian" excision of four anti-slavery Northern synods in a purge that precipitated the split between Old and New Schools in 1837. "Gone at a stroke were 28 presbyteries, 509 ministers, and 60,000 communicant members." But although the New School contained many orthodox Calvinists, especially in the South, Noll's account shows that it also tolerated exponents of what the Old School saw as dangerously erroneous doctrines that denied predestination, promoted watered-down versions of sin, and questioned Calvinist teaching on Jesus's sacrifice and the Atonement.

Noll describes Samuel Hopkins and his "New Divinity" followers in New England as men who "tried to extrapolate [Jonathan] Edwards' insights into a full theological system." He defends them as essentially orthodox but acknowledges their "traces of a more progressive theology." If Hopkins tried to defend orthodoxy, his notions of "benevolence" and "love" nonetheless swerved from the doctrine of imputation, according to which God holds humanity responsible for Adam's sin. As Noll's account shows, those "traces" opened the floodgates to a liberalization that less generous critics condemn as apostasy. What cannot be denied is that Hopkins gave up on original sin, contributing to a long retreat from the belief in inherent human depravity.

For all Noll's graciousness, I doubt that he believes in a Christianity without original sin and human depravity. Indeed, writing of the early phase of mainline American Protestantism, he admirably recounts its disintegration into ethical philosophy, but he then shies away from a full unraveling of its later phases. Thus he inadvertently mutes an understanding that Christianity as a way of salvation rather than a moral theory makes no sense apart from man's inherent sinfulness. Liberal Protestantism, not to mention liberal Catholicism, ends up vulnerable to H. Richard Niebuhr's delightful thrust: "A God without wrath brought men without sin into a kingdom without judgment through the ministrations of a Christ without a cross."

NOLL MAY NOT LIKE THE following generalizations, but I believe that his book supports them. It was a steady declension from Jonathan Edwards to Hopkins's New Divinity and on to the New Haven Theology of Nathaniel Taylor and Lyman Beecher, which "left behind Jonathan Edwards' Augustinian principles in order to save Edwards' concern for evangelism and his style of careful philosophical reasoning." With that slide loomed a universe without a God of wrath: for if man never fell, what has God to be wrathful about? Hopkins gagged on this: "If I give up this doctrine, I must give up Christianity." He was right. He nonetheless soon fell prey to angry criticism from orthodox Calvinists for doing just that. Step by step Hopkins adopted his opponents' premises and moralized his theology.

Liberals, concerned to attract more church members, increasingly championed a gospel centered on a good, moral, Christian life rather than on the glory of God. In *Piety Versus Moralism* (1931), Joseph Haroutunian concluded harshly but fairly that the New Divinity abandoned Calvinism: "It was Calvinism soiled and bruised in its struggle against the humanitarianism of the age, exaggerated here, distorted there, sheepish and worried, and weakening." Noll has some fun with the social implications. Beecher and his reformist colleagues "determined to (and the list is nearly endless) outlaw dueling, promote revival, found literary magazines, combat the Episcopal menace, publish books that the public would read, and on and on." Noll spares us elab-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

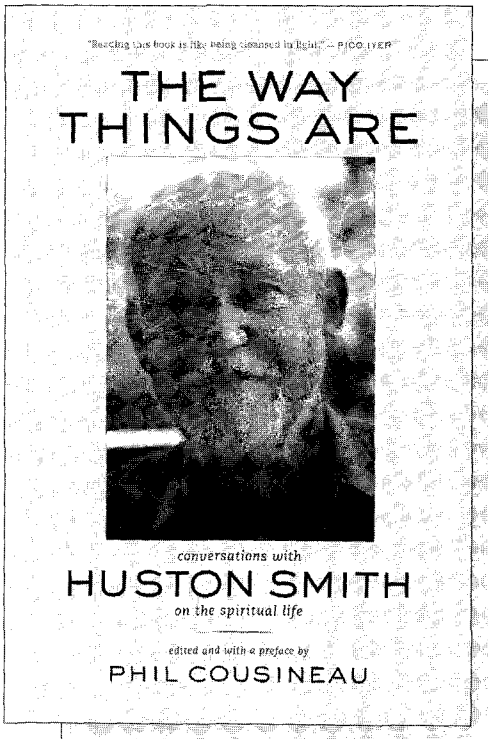
oration of the "on and on," but he might have added Theodore Dwight's campaign against cruelty to lobsters.

Southerners responded to these liberalizations with a theologically sound outrage, but these days even Noll keeps the pro-slavery theologians at arm's length. This aversion constantly gets him into historiographical trouble, since—along with Charles Hodge's embattled orthodox Presbyterian remnant at Princeton Theological Seminary—it was the Southerners who firmly refused to abandon the essentials of Christian doctrine. Noll refers to theologians who "were readier to use conscience to interpret Scripture than either Edwards or Hopkins had been." He cites Lewis O. Saum's *The Popular Mood of Pre-Civil War America* (1980) to maintain that the common people remained closer to Christian—and Calvinist—orthodoxy than the elites did. These are sound generalizations about the North, but they do not hold for the South, and Noll may not mean to suggest that they did. In any case, Robert Lewis Dabney of Virginia accused Taylor and all anti-slavery men of abandoning Calvinism, denying the divinity of Jesus (the heresy known as Socinianism), and making benevolence God's central quality while ignoring the justice of His self-proclamation as a "consuming fire." Dabney charged that they were transforming benevolence into a doctrine of utilitarian selfishness and marketplace ethics.

In the North, orthodox Calvinists fought Taylor tenaciously, but they could not stem the retreat of the mainline churches from the doctrine of original sin. Even Trinitarianism went up for grabs. As Vincent Harding makes clear in *A Certain Magnificence: Lyman Beecher and the Transformation of American Protestantism* (1991), the self-proclaimed orthodox Beecher defended the doctrine of the Trinity vigorously in his early years, but thereafter mentioned it less and less and with little discernible conviction. The popular and heterodox Horace Bushnell developed a spirited defense of sorts of the Trinity that made the skin of the orthodox crawl. Declaring God directly related to his creatures, Bushnell described the Trinity as a "symbol." The Unitarians sneered as they accepted the capitulation of nominal Calvinists, who were steadily shedding "the five points of Calvinism" or "TULIP" (total depravity, unconditional election, limited atonement, irresistible grace, perseverance of the saints). It took little perspicacity to recognize that liberal modernizers were embracing radical individualism and sloughing off the corporatist tendencies of the Christian tradition. The Southern divines and secular social critics had more than a little perspicacity.

If Noll has an American Protestant hero, it is Jonathan Edwards. He incisively criticizes Bushnell, Charles Finney, Nathaniel Taylor, and others who "honored Edwards's memory" while eviscerating his teaching. They espoused doctrines that Noll exposes as heretical, although he shuns the label and treats Bushnell and even Emerson with kid gloves. While pillorying Bushnell's romantic nationalism, he links him with Dabney and John Adger of South Carolina as a "master of the Scriptures." Does he mean to be facetious? Dabney and Adger, yes, but Bushnell? Noll has Bushnell "often regarded as the most creative American theologian of the age." No doubt he is "often regarded," but by whom? And for what? For his "creative" dismantling of the basic Christian doctrine? I doubt Noll numbers himself among those who have regarded Bushnell as such.

NOLL'S DETERMINED PREFERence for Northern theologians who seem at odds with his own deepest convictions emerges most dramatically from his idealization of Abraham Lincoln. In Noll's view, American theologians offered "little of theological profundity" on the meaning of the Civil War, but Lincoln did just that in his "moral reflections," especially in the second inaugural address. "None probed so profoundly the ways of God or the response of humans to the divine constitution of the world. None penetrated as deeply into the nature of providence. And none described the fate of humanity before God with the humility or the sagacity of the president." And he notes without laughter that "Emerson betrayed no doubt about his certainty that Lincoln had been divinity's agent to bring all of the human race toward perfection." He does not note that Emerson—and not a few other Northerners—said as much about the psychotic and mendacious John Brown. In Noll's reading, Lincoln refused to play a virtuous North against a sinful South. He sought to draw the nation back to-



"Reading this book is like being cleansed in light." — PICO IYER
THE WAY THINGS ARE
conversations with
HUSTON SMITH
on the spiritual life
edited and with a preface by
PHIL COUSINEAU

"I can't think of a more moving and beautiful, more rigorous and wise, book to help us through these troubled times."
—PICO IYER

THE WAY THINGS ARE
Conversations with
**HUSTON SMITH**
on the Spiritual Life
Edited and with a Preface by Phil Cousineau

$24.95 at bookstores or order (800) 822-6657 • www.ucpress.edu
**UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS**


LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

gether after the war, and his "magnanimity and moral even-handedness" contrasted with the calls for blood and vengeance that were coming from Northern divines.

I do not wish to quarrel with colleagues who rank Lincoln as America's greatest president, nor would I presume to tell Protestants how to be good Protestants. But the determination to canonize Lincoln by those who denounce Catholic "idolatry" is, well, unseemly. And they stretch much too much. Lincoln, like Emily Dickinson and Herman Melville, "may have been pushed by the successes of 'American Christianity' into post-Protestant, even post-Christian, theism." Such people, to be faithful in their hearts, had to reject organized Christianity and Jesus as the Way and the Truth. Noll has Lincoln stand almost alone among public figures: "Lincoln's concept of providence combined the conventions of his age with a much more primordial vision." The content of that vision is much clearer to Noll than it is to me. I am not at all sure what he is talking about. There is no reason to believe that Lincoln accepted Jesus as Lord, Savior, Redeemer—as the Resurrection and the Life—however sincerely he embraced a code of ethics compatible with or even derived from Jesus's teachings, but every reason to credit him as a statesman who sought a post-war reconciliation that would facilitate the spread of the Republican Party in the South.

On a more concrete matter, Noll paraphrases Lincoln as saying that the United States "might not necessarily be a uniquely chosen nation, or at least that the moral constraints operating on America were the same as those for other nations, and that these universal standards of justice were of greater consequence than any supposed chosenness of the United States." Lincoln came to doubt what America's best theologians long asserted, "the long-treasured axiom that the United States had enjoyed and would continue to enjoy, a unique destiny as a divinely chosen people."

Noll's "best theologians" are Yankees. I shall not here protest that the South had theologians at least as impressive as the best the North had to offer. But I cannot imagine James Henley Thornwell or Robert Lewis Dabney—or John Girardeau, John Adger, or John Leland Dagg—suggesting that the moral restraints imposed on other nations did not apply to the United States. On America as "a uniquely chosen nation," hear Thornwell, in his great fast-day "Sermon on National Sins." With secession and war imminent, he chose as his text Isaiah 37:1 ("And it came to pass, when King Hezekiah heard it, that he rent his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the Lord"). Thornwell began:

> I have no design, in the selection of these words, to intimate that there is a parallel between Jerusalem and our own Commonwealth in relation to the Covenant of God. I am far from believing that we alone, of all the people on earth, are possessed of the true religion, and far from encouraging the narrow and exclusive spirit which, with the ancient hypocrites denounced by the Prophet, can complacently exclaim, The Temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, are we. Such arrogance and bigotry are utterly inconsistent with the penitential confessions which this day has been set apart to evoke.

"If within the dominant interpretive framework of the period," Noll writes, "proslavery won the exegetical battle, no Bible-believing abolitionist would believe it." He remarks that, while a majority of Americans probably believed in biblical sanction for slavery, no significant body of Protestants elsewhere in the English-speaking world agreed. True enough. But it is hard to fathom Noll's conclusion that the inability of the pro-slavery side to win adherents abroad somehow rendered their interpretation of Scripture wrong.

HOW STRONG WERE THE ABOLITIONIST and pro-slavery appeals to Scripture? Twentieth-century Americans might not wish to bother, but millions of nineteenth-century Americans cared passionately. The Reverend Leonard Bacon pleaded, in words made famous by Lincoln without attribution, that if slavery is not wrong, nothing is wrong. The Reverend Ferdinand Jacobs of Charleston replied, "If the scriptures do not justify slavery, I know not what they do justify. If we err in maintaining this relation, I know not when we are right—truth then has parted her usual moorings and floated off into an ocean of uncertainty."

The pro-slavery arguments were straightforward. Nothing in the Old Testament condemns slavery. The great patriarch Abraham and other of God's worthies held slaves with God's blessing. Solomon built the Temple with slave labor as well as a corvée. Jesus drove moneychangers, not slaveholders, from the Temple. Every church mentioned in connection with the Apostles included slaves and slaveholders. Neither Jesus nor the Apostles uttered a word against slavery, much less declared it sinful. The strength of the pro-slavery performance makes comprehensible the ease with which Southern whites satisfied themselves that God sanctioned slavery.

The abolitionists did not successfully make their case for slavery as sin. Noll recognizes but dangerously underestimates the influence of radical abolitionists, including leading clergymen, who declared that if the Bible could be shown to sanction slavery, it should be discarded as the devil's own book. By the 1830s abolitionists were leading the war against Christian orthodoxy. They unfolded an interpretation of higher law that played the Spirit of the Bible against the Word and then transformed the Holy Spirit, as objectively manifested in the Word, into the subjective spirit or opinion of every man. Thus they transformed conscience from being the impress of the Holy Spirit on men's minds into a higher standard than the Word. Noll, his verbal restraint notwithstanding, demonstrates that rejection of the letter for the spirit undermined belief in Christianity itself.

Abolitionist arguments from Scripture ranged from the laughable to the flagrantly dishonest, as when leading lights made themselves ridiculous by denying that the ancient Israelites held slaves at all. Noll acknowledges the pro-slavery biblical argument as "formidable." He recognizes, too, the intellectual power of Thornwell and Dabney, but like other historians he does not consider the form of the antebellum debates. The principal defenders of slavery cited the abolitionists' books, often quoting at length to assure readers that they were quoting in context. The abolitionists did not return the courtesy. They did not even mention pro-slavery books, much less present their arguments concretely and in context. Their preferred method was to dismiss pro-slavery positions with sneers, or with elaborate argumentation against views that their opponents did not hold.

NOLL'S BACK-OF-THE-HAND TO the Southern divines is all the more unfortunate since he provides a stunning context

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

for his account of the coming of the Civil War. In the first half of the nineteenth century, he writes, the Bible remained a powerful factor in transatlantic society and politics: in Europe in association with monarchical conservativism, and in the United States with democratic republicanism. The ideologies of America's revolutionary and constitutional periods undermined trust in traditional authorities and thereby "had the ironic effect of scripturalizing the United States." Democratization and anti-traditionalism in American religion and politics called forth a literal interpretation of Scripture—the view that Scripture meant what it said. "Once interpretation had become a democratic enterprise, attempting to understand the Bible literally became the only possible goal."

Noll perceptively notes that every man was being invited to interpret the sacred texts for himself—the Constitution as well as the Bible, in an analogy "sometimes drawn explicitly." Incredibly, he then cites William Ellery Channing, although it was Thornwell, Dabney, and a host of Southern divines who were holding the fort for the curious notion that words ought to mean what they say and the more curious notion that those who were ready to deny the plain words of the Bible were no less ready to deny the Southern states rights clearly annunciated in the Constitution.

Noll has sport with Henry Ward Beecher's announcement that he could easily prove the Bible to be anti-slavery. Alas, Noll observes, Beecher "did not adduce a single text to that end." Elsewhere Noll quotes Beecher at length only to expose his statements as false. As religious thinkers, Noll lets the abolitionists off lightly. He sighs that those who tried to reconcile the Bible with anti-slavery had to "perform an intellectual high-wire act." They had to show how anti-slavery arguments could be read as other than "infidel attacks on the authority of the Bible itself." Noll claims that the Bible, like commonsense moral reasoning and republican principles, simultaneously sanctioned and condemned slavery. But whereas the pro-slavery divines piled up evidence of biblical sanction, Noll bypasses textual evidence of condemnation and regrets that the debate reduced to a "forced dichotomy" of orthodoxy with slavery or heresy without it. He arrestingly suggests that a faulty hermeneutic imposed severe rigidity on both the pro-slavery and anti-slavery theologians, and that peculiarly American conditions prevented a turn to the alternative hermeneutics offered by African Americans, Roman Catholics, and certain Reformed Protestants, which could have established the anti-slavery case. His illuminating discussion clarifies much, but it does not demonstrate how any of the alternatives convincingly grounded the opposition to slavery in Christian doctrine.

In considering alternative hermeneutics, Noll uncharacteristically engages in sleight of hand. He credits African Americans with "the most radical alternative to Reformed literalism," but he demonstrates conclusively that they contributed nothing of substance to the theological debate. He tries to save his unfortunate concession to current prejudices by claiming that only African Americans clearly distinguished between the Bible on race and the Bible on slavery. He adds that the distinction between slavery in general and black slavery in particular was completely lost on Southerners. In a book that is a model of scholarly accuracy, he is on this matter breathtakingly wrong. Thornwell, Dabney, and other leading Southern theologians could hardly have been clearer on the distinction. They defended "slavery in the abstract"—slavery as the proper condition of labor regardless of race. One after another they demonstrated that the Bible sanctioned slavery without racial referent.

Noll laments that Bible-believing emancipationists felt they had to find slavery *malum in se* in Scripture in order to campaign against it. But he shows that while Charles Hodge and other Northern conservatives found nothing in Scripture to condemn slavery as sin, they found other grounds to oppose modern slavery as incompatible with Christian practice. The issue, in Noll's view, concerned "cultural hermeneutics as well as biblical exegesis." He credits Hodge with seeming to recognize "that when conditions in which words were spoken changed, the meaning of the words also changed." He charges, unjustly I think, that Hodge ended by being "hamstrung by a constitutional conservatism that left him more troubled by the abolitionist threat to biblical truth than by slavery's threat to holiness."

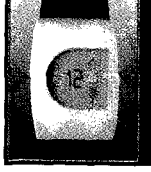
In my reading, Hodge, like Thornwell and no few Southerners, made the final test the extent to which Southern slavery could be made to approximate an Abrahamic or Christian model for master-slave relations. But the radical abolitionists cast anathema on the adherence to such a standard. For if accepted, emancipationists would have to work patiently with Southern slaveholders, not assault them as the anti-Christ. The radicals may well have been right that the South would not give up slavery without war. But they failed miserably to make their case for scriptural condemnation of slavery as inherently sinful, and therefore they could not justify the holy war that they desperately sought.

From the Revolution to the Civil War, Noll writes, evangelical Protestants campaigned to civilize and to Christianize the United States. To a notable extent they succeeded, but in the process they became domesticated. The Civil War trivialized the Christian theology that had brought American Protestantism into existence. Noll ends with a caveat: the theologians wrought all too well and may have been too successful. Their evangelization opened the way to secularization. The merger of Reformed biblicism with principles of American freedom, expounded by the canons of commonsense philosophy, proved too strong to be destroyed, but "they were nonetheless permanently damaged."

With extraordinary learning and intellectual sophistication Noll re-opens and re-interprets the enduring questions of the relation of religion to politics in America's great national tragedy. So forget my carping. Everyone who pretends to an interest in American history and American politics, to say nothing of American religion, must read this book. ■

CORNELL in NEW YORK CITY
an academic degree for practitioners in
**Industrial and Labor Relations**
- Part-time Master's program
- Renowned Cornell faculty
- Small, Saturday classes
- Affordable Ivy-League education

Collective Bargaining - Law & Public Policy - Research
Human Resource Management - Labor Economics
Organizational Behavior
212.340.2886 - mpsnyc@cornell.edu
www.ilr.cornell.edu/mpsnyc
ilr

WITTY WAYS TO TELL TIME

*Digital I Watch.* Aluminum case, black leather strap.
Time shown: 12:23:05.
$130.
To Order: 1-800-721-2611
www.timebydesign.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

## LOS ANGELES DIARIST

# Beans for Life

IF A PREGNANT WOMAN WEARS RED underwear with a safety pin tucked into it, will it make her newborn child healthier? No self-respecting physician would say so. But the possibility may be worth considering, thanks to a phenomenon scientists call the "Latino health paradox."

AS YOU MIGHT SUSPECT, PEOPLE WHO don't have regular access to medical care tend to end up sicker than people who do, since it's through regular checkups that you're most likely to catch things like cancer or heart disease before they kill you. And, naturally enough, people who don't have health insurance tend to be sickest of all. So, because Hispanics in the United States are far more likely to be uninsured than the average American, it ought to follow that they're also much less healthy than the average American. But that's the paradox: They aren't. Quite the contrary: Hispanics in the United States are healthier than the rest of the country. *Far* healthier, in fact. According to surveys by David Hayes-Bautista, a professor at UCLA who has conducted some of the most authoritative work on the matter, the rate of heart disease among California Latinos is actually lower than for the population as a whole—this, despite the fact that Latinos are more likely to be overweight and smoke (both major risk factors for heart disease). Latinos are also less likely to have strokes or suffer from cancer. By better avoiding heart attacks, strokes, and cancer—the three leading causes of death in the United States—Latinos enjoy unusually long life expectancies. A Latina woman living in the United States, for example, will probably live longer than the average American female.

WHAT DOES THIS HAVE TO DO WITH wearing red underwear when you're pregnant? Well, during lunar or solar eclipses, expectant mothers from Mexico (and some other parts of Latin America) frequently wear bright red panties with a safety pin tucked through them, the result of a tradition dating back to Aztec days. Seems the Aztecs (or maybe the Mayans, depending on whose research you believe) thought the eclipse released energy that could cause birth defects. To ward off its power, pregnant women wouldn't go outside without tying a red string around their waists with an arrowhead attached to it. Eventually, as superstition gave way to comfort, the string and arrowhead evolved into a pair of panties with a safety pin attached. And wouldn't you know it? Hispanic women are less likely to have low-birthweight babies than the average American, even though the average American gets much more sustained—and much better quality—medical care during pregnancy.

OF COURSE, NOBODY SERIOUSLY THINKS this has anything to do with underwear, safety pins, or, for that matter, the alignment of the solar system. But something about being Latino obviously makes you relatively healthy, at least when it comes to heart disease and certain types of cancer. Genetics could play a role, given the well-known links between ethnicity and disease. (Think African Americans and sickle-cell anemia or Jews and Tay-Sachs disease.) But the Latino health "advantage" seems to dissipate over time; the longer a Latino has been in the United States, the more likely he or she is to suffer from the same health problems as other Americans. As a result, most researchers believe some cultural factor must be at work, too—i.e., something that has to do with growing up in a Latino family or community and engaging in its customs, rather than having a specific genetic trait. The most likely candidate seems to be diet, perhaps something as simple as eating a lot of beans, which are high in fiber and other nutrients linked to better coronary health.

UNFORTUNATELY, NOT EVERYBODY IS SO eager to unravel this mystery. Hayes-Bautista, for one, says that liberal activists frequently try to downplay findings about Latinos' good health, which they fear could undercut arguments for expanding health coverage to the uninsured (who, in Southern California, are predominantly Hispanic). It's not an implausible assessment, I suppose, given the difficulty of rallying support for government-subsidized health insurance; but there have to be better ways of helping the uninsured than covering up information that might make all of us healthier, particularly since healthier people means less spent on health care, which means more financial resources for everybody.

ALAS, A MUCH MORE SERIOUS POLITIcal challenge to studies of ethnic health has emerged this year, in the form of Proposition 54. The measure, which will appear on the same October ballot with the proposed recall of Governor Gray Davis, would forbid the state—or any institution that relies upon state funding—from collecting information sorted by race. Although the initiative does contain an exception for the collection of certain medical information, it's so narrowly defined that it would apply mainly to clinical trials of drugs, not the sort of generalized population data upon which public health studies rely. The result, according to the physicians rallying against it, would be sheer havoc. "It would stop my research dead in its tracks," says Esteban Burchard, a physician-researcher at the University of California, San Francisco, who specializes in the effects of asthma on the Hispanic population.

THE MASTERMIND BEHIND THE INITIATIVE is Ward Connerly, the same man who six years ago organized the successful California initiative banning affirmative action in state-funded institutions. Connerly sees this latest ballot measure, which he calls the "racial privacy" initiative, as merely the next step to move California "beyond race—to stop living on the hyphen." Its approval, Connerly told *Time* magazine, could eventually lead to a nationwide backlash against "shuffling people into little boxes and tables." Maybe. Or, maybe because it will eliminate data collection about (among other things) cancer clusters that affect particular ethnic groups, more people will wind up in a different sort of box—the oblong kind. When it comes to letting politics get in the way of good science, sometimes the right and left have more in common than meets the eye.

**JONATHAN COHN**

TNR *senior editor Jonathan Cohn is also a Kaiser Family Foundation media fellow.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# One More Time: Californians Face the Race Issue

**John H. Bunzel is a senior research fellow at the Hoover Institution, past president of San Jose State University, and a former member of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights.**

California voters will be asked to confront the race issue once again when the Racial Privacy Initiative (RPI) appears on the October 7th, 2003 ballot (unless the court intervenes). The measure would prohibit the state and other public entities, such as universities, from collecting information on a person's race, ethnicity, or national origin.

Backers of the initiative claim it would be a major step toward creating a color-blind society. Asking people to check a box identifying their race or ethnicity prolongs "race consciousness," they maintain. "The only way to make race not count is to stop counting it." Those who support RPI insist that race and ethnicity are not the most important things to know about people—hence their desire to eliminate statistics of race and ethnicity from the records of California.

**Striving toward a color-blind California is a noble goal; unfortunately, the RPI initiative will do nothing to make that goal a reality.** The sad fact is that race remains, as author Richard Rodriguez has observed, "the sine qua non of American transactions."

One may look forward to a time when racism and discrimination no longer scar our lives yet still oppose a measure such as RPI that would prevent policymakers from discovering areas where whites, blacks, Hispanics, and Asians are treated differently by everybody from loan officers to teachers and doctors.

One thing seems certain. As *San Francisco Chronicle* columnist Debra Saunders has argued, "Not knowing the facts will not put an end to discrimination or make racial equality a more immediate reality."

"But isn't it discrimination," some one will ask, "to classify people by racial categories?" The answer is no—unless the intention is to pit one minority group against another. **It is not discrimination to record a person's race or ethnicity when the openly acknowledged purpose is to eliminate racial inequities, not perpetuate them.**

Statistical evidence about racial and ethnic groups helps track various forms of discrimination, especially as it affects the everyday lives of people of color. Equally important, race- and ethnic-based data can also assist in charting the economic progress of black Americans who have significantly improved their situation. As Harvard demographer Edward Glaeser has noted, the facts represent not just changes for the better but "big changes in terms of historical trends."

Everyone in this increasingly fierce debate wants to see a time when people will treat each other equally and fairly. But it is a mistake to replace empirical observations with ideological or moral preconceptions. Race and ethnicity continue to be real forces in American life, and it is wishful thinking to pretend they are irrelevant or "artificial." By making constructive use of racial and ethnic data, state planners and legislators can determine not only which policies may be succeeding (and which ones are not) but how closely many issues of race and inequality remain intertwined.

*— John H. Bunzel*

Paid for by the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.

Interested in more commentary on public policy?

*Visit us on-line at* **www.hoover.org** *or contact us to receive a complimentary copy of the 200-page, award-winning* Hoover Digest.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A NEW ORIGINAL SERIES

Executive Producers
GEORGE CLOONEY STEVEN SODERBERGH

# K STREET

Politics from the inside out.

PREMIERES SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 10:30PM/9:30C

NEW EPISODES SUNDAYS AT 10PM/9C

HBO

Subscribe online at HBO.com AOL Keyword: HBO © 2003 Home Box Office, Inc. All rights reserved. ℠ Service mark of Home Box Office, Inc.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED